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SACRED ELOQUENCE;

OR,

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PREACHING.

BY REV. THOMAS J. POTTER,

PROFESSOR OF SACRED ELOQUENCE IN THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY COLLEGE OF ALL HALLOWS.

"Prædicate Evangelium omni creaturæ."

MARC. XVI.

"Mundus sum a sanguine omnium; non enim subterfugi quominus annuntiarem omne consilium Dei vobis."

ACT. APOST. XX.

DUBLIN:

JAMES DUFFY, 15, WELLINGTON-QUAY,

AND

22, PATERNOSTER-ROW, LONDON.

1866.

251 M
P855

25531

DUBLIN:
Printed by James Moore,
2, CRAMPTON-QUAY.

TO

THE MOST REVEREND AND RIGHT REVEREND

THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS:

TO

THE VERY REVEREND AND REVEREND THE CLERGY,

Secular and Regular,

OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND:

IN THE HOPE THAT IT MAY NOT BE FOUND ALTOGETHER UNWORTHY OF THEIR PATRONAGE

Whom the Holy Ghost has placed to rule the Church of God:

NOR ALTOGETHER USELESS TO

THOSE WHO ARE ENGAGED IN THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD:

WITH A KEEN SENSE OF ITS IMPERFECTIONS,

BUT

WITH A FIRM RELIANCE

ON THE KINDLY FORBEARANCE AND THE GENEROUS SYMPATHY

OF THOSE TO WHOM IT IS OFFERED:

THIS WORK

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

IN THE BEAUTIFUL WORDS OF ONE

WHOSE WISE MAXIMS WILL BE FREQUENTLY FOUND EMBODIED IN ITS PAGES:

Magno labore quæsita et inventa sunt:
Magno labore disputata et nuntiata sunt:
Sit labor noster fructuosus vobis,
Et benedicat anima nostra

DOMINUM.

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PREFACE.

WHILST I venture to hope that it will not be found less serviceable or less interesting to the clergy in general, I think it right and just to state distinctly in this place, that this work has been compiled primarily with a view to the use of the class of Sacred Eloquence in our Foreign Missionary College of All Hallows. During the period in which I have had charge of this department, my pupils and I have suffered, not only great inconvenience, but loss of time, from want of some work which, written in the English Language, and, embodying in a clear, simple, and, above all, practical manner, the leading principles of Sacred Eloquence as laid down by those who must necessarily be the guides of the Ecclesiastic in this matter, might serve the student as a Text-book during his college course, and as a work of reference during those future years in which he was to be actively engaged in the preaching of the Divine Word. I have waited patiently in the hope that some one better qualified, or, some one who felt more confidence in his ability for the task, would undertake it. Having waited in vain, I have at length, after much hesitation and anxious thought, ventured to compile the Treatise which is here presented to the public.

These remarks will at once serve to explain any qualifications which I may appear to claim in undertaking it, as also

what may perhaps strike the reader as the leading characteristics of the work itself.

I can say, with perfect sincerity, that I claim no peculiar aptitude for the task which I have aspired to perform, beyond what may arise from the fact that I have been actively engaged in teaching this matter for nearly ten years; that I have compiled the work from the most approved sources within my reach; and that I have laboured, to the utmost of my knowledge and of my ability, to render it as perfect and as practically useful as might be possible. If I could not claim thus much for myself it would be great presumption on my part to appear before those to whom this work is offered. More than this I do not claim, unless, perhaps, I may be permitted to add that I have brought out this work because I have been assured by those, whose opinion I necessarily value most highly, that there is a necessity for it; and because, so far as I know, there is no work in the English language which can be put into the hands of the Ecclesiastical student, or which will serve the Clergyman, as a manual of preaching—as a guide to the becoming discharge of what is one of his most important, as it is one of the most holy and sublime, of his duties.

I believe, as I hope, that the verdict of my readers will assign to this work the quality of simplicity as its characteristic. In view of the special object which was before me, I have, in the compilation of this Treatise, aimed at the greatest simplicity, as well of conception as of expression, which was compatible with the proper treatment of my subject. Whilst I have avoided as much as possible what I may call the purely Rhetorical aspect of that subject, I have been obliged in some places to enter into questions which, at first sight, may seem somewhat technical and scholastic. Possibly, I may appear to have treated some of these matters too much in detail. I venture to hope that I shall be found, on the one hand, to have entered into no question which is not

thoroughly and practically useful; whilst, on the other, my purpose has continually been to aim much more at throwing out substantial ideas, and at suggesting leading thoughts, than at their minute development. I took it for granted that, as regards my pupils, something was to be left to my own oral explanations in class; whilst I knew well that the experience of my brethren who are engaged in the preaching of the Divine Word—an experience so much greater than mine can pretend to be, would more than supply, so far as they are concerned, for any deficiency in my work, if such there be, in the way of laboured and diffuse working out of the general principles laid down.

When such great masters as St. Augustine, St. Charles Borromeo, St. Francis of Sales, and a host of others, have treated this subject, I need scarcely say that I make no pretension of having advanced any new or original views in this work. I have merely aimed at presenting those principles, which are as old as the illustrious authors quoted, in a more simple and familiar manner; and with such an adaptation of general principles to peculiar circumstances as must become necessary in course of time, and with such a modification as becomes no less necessary when those general principles have to be applied, not only to those to whom they were originally and specially addressed, but to the instruction and sanctification of others who differ from them in habits and in sympathies, in education and in passions, in country and in race. In treating this subject I have kept the old maxim, *Non nova, sed nove*, ever before my mind.

I think it only remains for me to acknowledge the sources whence I have derived the matter for this work, and to return my thanks where they are due. Without further reference to the standard authors whose names will be found mentioned in the work itself, my grateful thanks are due, in the first place, to the venerable Curé of St. Sulpice, M. Hamon, who, in the most generous and unqualified manner,

placed his valuable *Traite de la Predication* at my disposal—to the Very Rev. J. H. Newman, who no less kindly allowed me to make copious extracts from his writings—and to the Rev. Professor Barry, of our Institution, whose Grammar of Eloquence has been of the greatest service to me in the purely Rhetorical portion of my work. I have also derived valuable information from the works of M. Van Hemel, Vicar-General of Malines, and the Rev. Canon Bellefroid of Liege.

With these brief remarks I submit my work with confidence to the friendly criticism and the generous forbearance of those for whom it has been compiled. I only beg of them to forget the imperfections which, doubtless, they will discover in its pages, in the remembrance of the earnest sincerity with which I have aspired and striven to be of some small service to those who are my brethren in the Holy Catholic Faith, fellow-labourers with me in the sublime ministry of the Church of God.

T. J. P.

Foreign Missionary College of All Hallows,
Easter, 1866.

THEORY.

Testificor coram Deo et Jesu Christo qui judicaturus est vivos et mortuos, prædica verbum, insta opportunè, importunè; argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientiâ et doctrinâ.

2 Tim. iv.

Curam animarum habentes, per se vel alios idoneos, si legitimè impediti fuerint, diebus saltem dominicis et festis solemnibus plebes sibi commissas, pro suâ et earum capacitate pascant salutaribus verbis. . . Si quis eorum præstare negligat, per censuras ecclesiasticas cogantur.

Præcepto divino mandatum est omnibus quibus animarum cura commissa est, oves suas . . . verbi divini prædicatione . . . pascere.

Concil. Trid. de Reform.

SACRED ELOQUENCE,

&c., &c.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

FTER the administration of the Holy Sacraments, the minister of the altar is called upon to discharge no duty more sublime in itself, more conducive to the glory of God, or more useful to his fellow-men, than the worthy and becoming preaching of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. In one sense, the effective preaching of the Gospel may be said to be almost as important as the administration of the Sacraments; for, although it is true that the Sacraments are the divine channels through which his minister causes the priceless blood of Christ to flow upon the souls of men, it is equally true that, at least as regards those who stand most in need of those Sacraments, preaching is the ordinary means by which men are brought under their influence. When the poor penitent is kneeling at our feet it is easy for us to reconcile him to his offended Maker; but the difficulty is to bring him to that point, and, as an ordinary rule, it is only through the agency of the pulpit that the terrors of God's judgments, the sweetness of his mercy and long-suffering, are brought to exercise their saving influence upon the sinner's soul. And, as there are many sinners in every flock, so, too, are there many souls

who are striving to walk not merely in the way of God's Commandments, but in the path of holy perfection; souls who are longing to be taught what is the holy, and the perfect, and the acceptable will of God in their regard; holy souls, who, by the perfect discharge of their ordinary duties, are striving not only *ut vitam habeant*, but, also, *ut abundantius habeant*. And, as it is undoubtedly the duty of the pastor to do all that lies in him to snatch the wandering sheep of his flock from the jaws of the infernal wolf, so, too, is it no less his duty to instruct the fervent and simple souls who are to be found in every congregation, in all those matters the knowledge of which is necessary in order to assist them in their efforts to attain the degree of holy perfection to which God has called them; that perfection which they, as persons living in the world, are to acquire by constant union of their hearts with Him; by constant reference of all their actions to Him; by the performance of all the duties of their state of life with that purity of intention which can alone render them pleasing to Him, or worthy of supernatural reward. And how, again, ordinarily speaking, are these fervent souls to be instructed in all these matters, except through the medium of the pulpit?

Hence it is that the preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is called upon to exercise a ministry which is most sublime in itself, and one which, as it may not be assumed without a divine vocation, surely no man will be rash enough to attempt to discharge without that fit and proper preparation which is due to the Gospel which he preaches, and to Him who is the author of it.

Be he the humblest country curate addressing but a congregation of simple and unlettered peasants, the preacher, when he ascends the pulpit, does so nevertheless in the name and with the authority of God, and with the same divine mission with which our blessed Lord Himself came to make known the saving truths of His Gospel to men. *Sicut misit*

*me Pater et ego mitto vos . . . euntes in mundum universum prædicate evangelium omni creaturæ . . . docete omnes gentes.** To him, as truly as to Moses of old, doth Almighty God declare: *Perge igitur et ego ero in ore tuo, doceboque te quid loquaris.*† *Ne timeas a facie eorum: quia ego tecum sum.*‡ To him does our divine Lord speak as truly and as really as he did when he charged His apostles to teach His Gospel to all nations; promising at the same time to be with them in their preaching, even to the consummation of the world; and imposing upon all men the obligation of listening to His ministers with the same reverence, and of paying the same obedience to them, as to Himself. *Docentes eos servare omnia quæcumque mandavi vobis . . . Qui vos audit me audit, et qui vos spernit me spernit.*§ Hence it is that the true minister of the Gospel realizes so deeply and so intimately the sublimity and the vast importance of the mission confided to him—*Prædicate evangelium.* Hence it is he labours so assiduously to prepare for his ministry, that, forgetting himself and all mere earthly ends, he may preach only Jesus Christ and Him crucified; that, like the great apostle of the Gentiles, he may be able to exclaim, *Non enim quæro quæ vestra sunt, sed vos.*‖ Hence it is that every tone of his voice, every glance of his eye, and every gesture of his hand, manifests how deeply he is penetrated with the importance of the duty entrusted to him, and how intimately he realizes the grandeur of the office which he discharges when he speaks as the ambassador of Jesus Christ—*Pro Christo legatione fungimur, tanquam Deo exhortante per nos.*¶ Hence it is that he preaches the Gospel of his Divine Master *Cum omni imperio*, that he is "instant in season and out of season, that he reproves, entreats, and rebukes, in all patience and doctrine." And hence, too, it is, that when he sees how God blesses the words of his mouth; when he sees how sinners are converted when

* Joan. xx.
† Exod. iv. 12.
‡ Jerem. i. 7.
§ Luc. x. 16.
‖ 2 Cor. xii. 14.
¶ Ib. v. 20.

he does but appeal to them; and how, under his teaching, the just run on with giant strides in the way of holy perfection, the fervent minister of the Gospel is never tired of labouring that he may prepare himself to discharge more and more efficaciously the ministry of the Word; with a greater exactness in doctrinal teaching; with a greater facility of pleasing his hearers, and of thus enchaining their attention; and, above all, with a greater power of influencing and moving the wills of men, which is the ultimate end and object of all preaching.

The dignity and grandeur of the office of the Christian preacher have, perhaps, never been more eloquently described than in Lamartine's magnificent sketch of Bossuet, the true prince of the French school of pulpit eloquence. We quote from the translation published by Mr. Bentley, London:*

"Of all the eminences," writes Lamartine, "which a mortal may reach on earth, the highest to a man of talent is incontestably the sacred pulpit. If this individual happens to be *Bossuet;* that is to say, if he unites in his person, conviction to inspire the commanding attitude, purity of life to enhance the power of truth, untiring zeal, an air of imposing authority, celebrity which commands respectful attention, episcopal rank which consecrates, age which gives holiness of appearance, genius which constitutes the divinity of speech, reflective power which marks the mastery of intelligence, sudden bursts of eloquence which carry the minds of listeners by assault, poetic imagery which adds lustre to truth,—a deep, sonorous voice, which reflects the tone of the thoughts,—silvery locks, the paleness of strong emotion, the penetrating glance and expressive mouth;—in a word, all the animated and well-varied gestures which indicate the emotions of the soul;—if such a man issues slowly from his self-concentrated reflection, as from some inward sanctuary; if he suffers himself to be raised gradually by excitement, like the

* "Memoirs of Celebrated Characters," by Lamartine. London: Richard Bentley.

eagle, the first heavy flapping of whose wings can scarcely produce air enough to carry him aloft; if he at length respires freely, and takes flight; if he no longer feels the pulpit beneath his feet; if he draws in a full breath of the Divine Spirit, and pours forth unceasingly from this lofty height, to his hearers, the inspiration which comes to them as the word of God,—this being is no longer individual man, he becomes an organ of the Divine will, a prophetic voice.

"And what a voice! A voice which is never hoarse, broken, soured, irritated, or troubled by the worldly and passionate struggles of interest peculiar to the time; a voice which, like that of the thunder in the clouds, or the organ in the cathedral, has never been anything but the medium of power and Divine persuasion to the soul; a voice which only speaks to kneeling auditors; a voice which is listened to in profound silence, to which none reply save by an inclination of the head or by falling tears—those mute applauses of the soul!—a voice which is never refuted or contradicted, even when it astonishes or wounds; a voice, in fine, which does not speak in the name of opinion, which is variable; nor in the name of philosophy, which is open to discussion; nor in the name of country, which is local; nor in the name of regal supremacy, which is temporal; nor in the name of the speaker himself, who is an agent transformed for the occasion; but which speaks in the name of God, an authority of language unequalled upon earth, and against which the lowest murmur is impious and the smallest opposition a blasphemy."

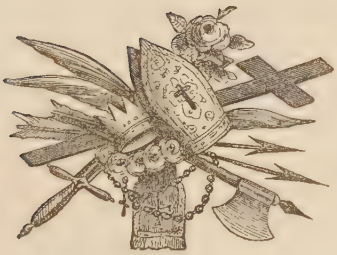
The means by which the sacred orator proposes to himself to obtain his end is by *instructing*, by *pleasing*, and by *moving* his flock. *Docere*, *placere*, et *movere*. These are the three elements of the power by which the rhetorician acts upon the souls of his fellow-men, and acquires his influence over them; a truth which St. Augustine has expressed in terms as brief as they are to the point: *Veritas pateat*, *veritas placeat*,

veritas moveat. By clear and exact instruction, combined with solid argumentation, the sacred orator is to enlighten and convince the understanding of his audience. By presenting that instruction and argumentation in a pleasing, graceful, and, so far as his subject may permit or demand, in a polished style and manner, he is to prepare the minds and hearts of his audience for those final and highest strokes of art by which he aspires to influence their wills and move them to his purpose. Finally, having convinced the understanding by the force of his arguments, whilst by the graces of his composition and his delivery he has at the same time rendered his hearers *attentos, benevolos et dociles;* the speaker, by the unction which he displays at once in his matter and in its delivery, by the burning earnestness, the zeal for the glory of God and the welfare and salvation of the souls of his listeners which he manifests in every tone of his voice, and even in every gesture of his hand, acts upon the hearts of his hearers, turns them whither he will, and moulds them to his purpose, thus attaining the happy result which every orator, but more especially every preacher, must necessarily propose to himself as the end and aim of all his preaching, viz.: the *persuading* of his hearers to take those good resolutions which he has already, by his argumentation, *convinced* them they ought to adopt.

It is one thing to *convince* our auditors that they are bound to take a certain step, it is another to *persuade* them to take it. Conviction is an essential part of persuasion, but it is *not* persuasion. Persuasion, *i. e.*, the art of influencing the will, is the ultimate end of all preaching, properly so called. It depends on two things, 1st, on *argument* to prove the fitness of the object proposed, and the expediency of the means suggested; and, 2ndly, on *exhortation*, *i. e.*, on the exciting of men to adopt those means, by appealing to their passions.* This is the analysis of persuasion, and, as is

* Whately's "Elements of Rhetoric."

evident, the orator, in order to persuade, must understand thoroughly the various parts of which it is composed. He must know how to satisfy the judgment by solid argument, and he must know how to move the will by the skilful stirring of the passions which influence the human heart. We call one of these the argumentative, and the other, the pathetic, or moving part of a discourse. He who best knows how to combine the two qualities, in their due proportion and measure, is undoubtedly the best and most effective preacher. To aid the young preacher, or the ecclesiastical student, in his efforts to attain this two-fold excellence, is the object of the following pages.



CHAPTER II.

REMOTE PREPARATION FOR PREACHING.

PREACHING is essentially a practical work. Although one of the highest works, whether we consider the mission and authority of the preacher or the matter and end of his preaching, to which the energies of man can be devoted, it is equally true that it is essentially a practical work, with a practical end to be attained by practical means; and, whilst in our preparation to discharge the sacred obligation of preaching the Gospel, we are, according to the famous rule of St. Ignatius, to pray as if everything depends upon God, we are to labour as if everything depends upon ourselves. In the following pages we therefore propose to consider:—I. The preparation, remote and proximate, for preaching. II. The method to be followed in composing a sermon; and, III. The manner of delivering it.

SECTION I.

STYLE.

The remote preparation for preaching consists in the employment of certain preparatory means which are calculated to give us a facility when we come to the actual work of composition. It would, perhaps, be more correct to say, that the remote preparation for preaching consists in the formation of our style, which, we need scarcely remark, is a most important matter. It is not so easy to explain what we

mean by style. It is not merely language, neither does it consist in words. Perhaps the best idea we can form of individual style is that of Dr. Blair, who describes it as the peculiar manner in which a man expresses his conceptions by means of language. Style must, therefore, necessarily have some reference to the manner in which a man thinks. It is a painting, in words, of the ideas which are born in a man's mind, and of the manner in which they are born there; and, hence, as no two men think in precisely the same manner, so no two men will have precisely the same style. Hence, too, in proportion as a man's mind is bold, clear, original, logical or sentimental, will his style partake of those qualities, if he be able to express his thoughts with facility in words. There are many men who think with great vigour, justice, and originality, and who, nevertheless, when they attempt to speak or write, are said to have a very bad style, and the reason of this is, that, either from some natural failing, or, more probably, from want of early training, they do not possess such a command of language as enables them to express their own thoughts *as* they conceived them. Hence, there is a want of harmony and concord between the *thought* and the *manner* in which it is expressed. The speaker feels that he is not saying what he thought in the way in which he conceived it; that he is endeavouring to express his idea in language which neither suits it nor expresses it; and, hence, as a natural consequence, that he expresses weakly and badly ideas which, in themselves, were original and powerful; and which, if he could have put them into words, might have left their mark upon his fellow-men. The possession, therefore, of a good style supposes that a man *thinks* well, and that he *expresses* those thoughts well. It supposes, too, that, as every man of mind thinks in a manner which, under some respect, is peculiar to himself, so, he expresses himself in a manner peculiar to himself; or, in other words, in a manner which is his own; and, according as the

logical or sentimental faculty predominates in his nature, with a predominance of one or other of these qualities in his style.

The following admirable remarks on this subject occur in Dr. Newman's "Essays on University Subjects:"*—

"A great author, Gentlemen, is not one who merely has a *copia verborum*, whether in prose or verse, and can, as it were, turn on at his will any number of splendid phrases and swelling sentences; but he is one who has something to say and knows how to say it. I do not claim for him, as such, any great depth of thought, or breadth of view, or philosophy, or sagacity, or knowledge of human nature, or experience of human life, though these additional gifts he may have, and the more he has of them the greater he is; but I ascribe to him, as his characteristic gift, in a large sense the faculty of expression. He is master of the two-fold λόγος, the thought and the word, distinct, but inseparable from each other. He may, if so be, elaborate his compositions, or he may pour out his improvisations, but in either case he has but one aim, and is conscientious and single-minded in fulfilling it. That aim is to give forth what he has within him; and from his very earnestness it comes to pass, that, whatever be the splendour of his diction or the harmony of his periods, he has with him the charm of an incommunicable simplicity. Whatever be his subject, high or low, he treats it suitably and for its own sake. If he is a poet, 'nil molitur *inepte*.' If he is an orator, then too he speaks, not only 'distinctè' and 'splendidè,' but also '*apte*.' His page is the clear mirror of his mind and life—

> 'Quo fit, ut omnis
> Votivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ
> Vita senis.'

"He writes passionately, because he feels keenly; forcibly, because he conceives vividly; he sees too clearly to be vague;

* Essay ii., Literature.

he is too serious to be otiose; he can analyze his subject, and therefore he is rich; he embraces it as a whole and in its parts, and therefore he is consistent; he has a firm hold of it, and therefore he is luminous. When his imagination wells up, it overflows in ornament; when his heart is touched, it thrills along his verse. He always has the right word for the right idea, and never a word too much. If he is brief, it is because few words suffice; if he is lavish of them, still each word has its mark, and aids, not embarrasses, the vigorous march of his elocution. He expresses what all feel, but all cannot say; and his sayings pass into proverbs among his people, and his phrases become household words and idioms of their daily speech, which is tesselated with the rich fragments of his language, as we see in foreign lands the marbles of Roman grandeur worked into the walls and pavements of modern palaces.

"Such preëminently is Shakespeare among ourselves; such preëminently Virgil among the Latins; such in their degree are all those writers, who in every nation go by the name of Classics. To particular nations they are necessarily attached from the circumstance of the variety of tongues, and the peculiarities of each; but so far they have a catholic and ecumenical character, that what they express is common to the whole race of man, and they alone are able to express it."

These remarks sufficiently demonstrate how important it is that every man who aspires by inclination, or who is bound by duty, to address his fellow-men, should possess a good style, and a style which is his own. As an ordinary rule, the foundation of a good style must be laid in the preparatory classes of poetry and rhetoric which form a necessary part of the education of every clergyman; and it is evident that it would be out of place here to enter into a consideration of those qualities which form the essential conditions of a good style, in the general acceptation of the term; as, for example, the perspicuity and ornamentation of language; the clear-

ness, unity, strength, and harmony, which are required to constitute a perfect sentence, and the manner of employing the various figures of speech. Any one wishing for more information on what we may call the fundamentals of style, may read with profit Blair's "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres," as also Rev. Professor Barry's "Grammar of Eloquence." When, therefore, we speak of the remote preparation for preaching as consisting in the employment of certain practical means which are calculated to give us a facility in actual composition, and in the formation of our style, we use the term *style* in its widest sense, and we also take for granted in the student the possession of at least a fair preparatory English education, together with a knowledge of the principles of English composition, and a reasonable facility in their use. The remote preparation, in this sense, for preaching, consists, In a judicious course of reading: In a collection of good and striking matter: In the practice of composition.

SECTION II.

A JUDICIOUS COURSE OF READING.

By a judicious course of reading is not meant, in this place, such a course of reading as we undertake with the view of collecting materials to aid us in the actual composition of our discourse. We shall speak of this later on, but, at present, we are merely considering that course of studious and reflective reading which is entered upon for the purpose of forming our style, of cultivating our taste, and of developing to the utmost those talents with which nature may have endowed us. It is certain that the studious reading of good models is the most excellent and most efficacious means of forming our style, and of developing our taste. Hence, the celebrated saying of Seneca, *Longum iter per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla.* Those rules

and precepts which are in themselves so good and so useful are never half so efficacious or striking, as when they are practically brought home to us in their application by a powerful writer; and, in fact, it is only in such application that we thoroughly comprehend the bearing of those principles, which, until we see them thus applied, must be to us more or less theoretical. It is this practical application which enables us to understand them, which reveals to us their real signification, which shows them to us in practice, and thus, whilst we are careful to retain to the full our own individuality, assists us to form and develope our own peculiar style. So true is it that the judicious reading of good models is one of the most efficacious ways of forming our style, that it is almost impossible to read such writers *without* insensibly acquiring, in some degree, their manner of expressing themselves; even although we may read without any such object before our minds. That we may derive full benefit from such a course of reading we must observe during it certain practical rules:—

1. We must, agreeably to the counsel of Quintilian, *Diu nonnisi optimus quisque, et qui credentem sibi minime fallit, legendus est*,* be content to confine ourselves for a long time, until our style is formed, to a small number of good and standard works. The reason of this is evident. By reading works of inferior merit the young writer exposes himself to be led astray by that false and meretricious style, both of thought and of word, which is so common at the present day, and which prevails to such an extent in the sensational novels and the flimsy essay writing of our time. He exposes himself to the danger of taking as true eloquence that which is false to the last degree, and of thus, perhaps irretrievably, ruining his style. On the other hand, by reading, studiously and attentively, a small number of really good writers in that peculiar department of eloquence which we aspire to

* Lib. x., cap. 1.

cultivate, we become filled with their spirit, with their manner of thinking and of speaking. We make them, so to speak, our own; and, thus cultivating and developing our own peculiar talent, we acquire a true taste, and form a just, peculiar, and more or less striking style; whilst those who read many books, without thoroughly studying any, derive but very little solid fruit from their reading.

2. Besides confining ourselves to a few standard writers, we must also take care not to read too much. In such a course of reading as that which we are now considering, it is a golden rule to read but little at a time, and to meditate on that little very deeply. If we read too much at once the mind becomes fatigued, and the eye merely rests upon the page, but we derive from our reading no clear, distinct, or lasting ideas. It is essential, then, to think much. If, for example, we are studying the sermon of some celebrated writer, we shall examine the plan and general arrangement of the discourse, with the mutual connection of the various parts. We endeavour to strip the proofs, and the reasons brought forward in support of them, of all the external influence which they may derive from the name and authority of the writer, by considering them in themselves. We endeavour to weigh them in the balance of their own simple value, and to discover whether they are really solid, whether they are to the point, and whether each one is in its proper place. We endeavour to put ourselves in the position of the author. We say to ourselves: "Here I had such or such a point to prove, and this is the way I have proved it." After having thus analyzed the discourse, and placed its skeleton before us; having the divisions and various proofs of the author clearly in our mind; we proceed to consider how he amplifies and embellishes these primary ideas; how he clothes this skeleton in such rich and beautiful garments; by what figures of speech, and by what strokes of oratory, he renders such a proof so telling and effective. We endea-

vour to penetrate and to master the art with which he applies the rules and precepts of rhetoric to his object, and, thus, perhaps, we shall discover, to our own great profit, our author's happy secret, and what it is which enables him to express his ideas so powerfully and so well. In order to fix the subject more deeply in our minds, it is most useful occasionally to make a written analysis of the matter which we are reading; considering—if the subject of our study be a sermon or other formal discourse—the nature of the plan, the proofs which are brought forward in support of the leading proposition to be sustained, and the principal oratorical developments of those proofs. This habit of analyzing what we read is of the greatest utility. It accustoms us to a spirit of reflection; it familiarizes us with order and method; whilst, at the same time, it engraves deeply on our memory the most striking beauties of the work we are perusing. Several of the most successful writers with whom we are acquainted, were, in their youth, assiduous in the practice of thus analyzing the matter which they read.

3. In his choice of books the young student must distrust his own judgment, and defer to that of men who are his elders in years, and his superiors in knowledge and wisdom. It does not follow because a book is popular that, therefore, it is a good model on which to form one's style. Many of the most popular works of the present day are about the last which a student should take up for this purpose. Let him apply his mind to the study of such works alone as have been consecrated by the verdict of ages, or placed in the first rank by the decided and unvarying judgment of those who are best qualified to guide public opinion. Too many books is, perhaps, one of the greatest evils of our age, and now, more than ever, it is necessary for the student to apply the old precept, *Non multa, sed multum,** to his reading.

* Plin. Jun. lib. vii. c. xi.

Among the works to which he will direct his attention, the Holy Scriptures most certainly hold the first place. For boldness of thought, for grandeur of conception, and sublimity of style, the books of the Old Testament are not to be approached. It is scarcely necessary to remark that it is generally admitted that most of the books of the Old Testament were written in verse, or in some kind of measured numbers. The general construction of the Hebrew poetry is very singular. Each period or verse is divided into correspondent, and generally equal numbers, which answer to one another both in sense and in sound. In the first member of the verse some sentiment is expressed. In the second member the same sentiment is amplified, or repeated in different terms, or perhaps contrasted with its opposite; but always in such manner that the same structure is preserved, and generally, nearly the same number of words. Instances of this occur everywhere in the Old Testament. Let us take the 95th Psalm as an exemplification of our meaning:—

First Member.	*Second Member.*
Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle.	Sing to the Lord all the earth.
Sing ye to the Lord and bless his name.	Show forth his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the Gentiles.	His wonders among all people.
For the Lord is great and exceedingly to be praised.	He is to be feared above all gods.
Praise and beauty are before him.	Holiness and majesty in his sanctuary.

We may clearly deduce the reason for this form of composition from the manner in which the Hebrews were accustomed to sing their sacred hymns. These hymns were performed by alternate bands of singers and musicians. For instance, one band began the hymn, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice," whereupon the chorus, or alternate band, took up the corresponding verse, "Let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." We have ventured to say that the

Hebrew poetry is unapproachable in its grandeur and sublimity. What more magnificent than the language of the ~~23rd~~ Psalm, which we may take as an example, and which is supposed to have been composed on the occasion of bringing back the Ark of the Covenant to Mount Zion. The whole people are following in devout procession. They begin to ascend the sacred mount, when the voices of some choristers are heard, asking "Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place?" With a burst of jubilant harmony the entire body respond, "The innocent in hands, and the clean of heart." As they approach the doors of the tabernacle, we have another burst of triumph and of praise: "Lift up your heads, ye princes; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting gates; and the King of Glory shall come in." Here again we have the semi-chorus asking, "Who is this King of Glory," to which, as the ark is introduced into the tabernacle, the answer is given in another shout of triumphant jubilee: "The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."

The sacred poetry is distinguished by the strength and conciseness of its style; and we may safely say that no other work so abounds with bold and life-like figures. It is alive, to use a homely expression, with metaphors, comparisons, allegories, and personifications. The pastoral habits of the Hebrew people and the peculiar nature of their country, its trees and flowers, its mountains and valleys, its long periods of drought, and the almost magical influence of its fertilizing showers, its earthquakes and tempests, its whirlwinds and darkness, are all brought into play in the sacred poetry, and with an imagery that is natural and expressive in the highest measure. Hence the magnificent figure in which Isaiah describes the earth "reeling to and fro, like a drunkard;" as, also, the appearance of the Almighty described in Ps. 17.

The style of the poetical books of the Old Testament is beyond that of all others fervid and bold. It cannot be

compared with the effusions of even the most gifted of merely human poets. It is often irregular, and often abrupt. Sometimes its connection is obscure, and its figures heaped upon one another almost to confusion; still, there is but one word which expresses its character. It is *sublime*. Sublimity is its characteristic. Other poetry may be elegant, may be polished, may even burn with passion, but the poetry has yet to be written which approaches, even within an infinite distance, to the sublimity of the poetry of Holy Writ; and we can best understand this when we reflect that the poetry of the Scriptures is the burst of inspiration, the language of men who are endeavouring to express, as far as human language can express them, the burning thoughts, the sublime conceptions, the grand ideas, which have been born of God.

Not only do the sacred writings abound in the highest exemplifications of all that renders poetry sublime and beautiful, but they also afford us choice examples of the different kinds of poetical composition. The book of Proverbs, and that of Ecclesiastes, are striking examples of the didactic species of poetry. The lamentation of David over his friend Jonathan, as also over his unfortunate son Absalom, are specimens of elegiac poetry, as tender and plaintive as were ever penned; whilst the book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah is probably the most perfect elegiac composition in the world. The Canticle of Canticles is a beautiful example of pastoral poetry, whilst the Old Testament is full of specimens of lyric poetry—that is, of compositions intended to be sung with music. Besides the song of Moses, of Deborah, and many others, the whole book of the Psalms may be considered as a collection of sacred odes, exhibiting that form of composition in all its varied and most striking forms.

Our space will not permit us to enter into an examination of the characteristics of the style of the various sacred

writers, but we cannot pass from this subject without particularly calling the attention of the student to the majestic and unparalleled grandeur of the compositions of the Prophet Isaiah. Majesty, truly, is the characteristic of his style. In the grandeur of his conceptions, and the wonderful power with which he expresses them, he stands alone; and we can readily conceive what is related of Bossuet—viz., that he never sat down to compose without previously reading a chapter of this prophet, after we have heard Lamartine's account of the impression which was made upon him by the Scriptures even in his childish days.*

"The Bible, and above all the poetical portions of Holy Writ, struck as if with lightning, and dazzled the eyes of the child; he fancied that he saw the living fire of Sinai, and heard the voice of Omnipotence re-echoed by the rocks of Horeb. His God was Jehovah; his lawgiver, Moses; his high-priest, Aaron; his poet, Isaiah; his country, Judæa. The vivacity of his imagination, the poetical bent of his genius, the analogy of his disposition to that of the Orientals, —the fervid nature of the people and ages described, the sublimity of the language, the everlasting novelty of the history, the grandeur of the laws,—the piercing eloquence of the hymns, and finally, the ancient, consecrated, and traditionally reverential character of the book, transformed Bossuet at once into a biblical enthusiast. The metal was malleable; the impression was received, and remained indelibly stamped. This child became a prophet: such he was born, such he was as he grew to manhood, lived, and died—the Bible transfused into a man."

As Isaiah is the most sublime, so David is the most pleasing of the sacred poets, whilst Job is distinguished by his powers of description. We have spoken at some little length of the beauties of the sacred writings, because we know no other work which can be of such service to the student in

* "Memoirs of Celebrated Characters," by Lamartine.

storing his mind with the grandest conceptions which have ever been expressed in words. We know not where he will acquire such true and, at the same time, such magnificent ideas of the majesty of God, as those which are given by Isaiah and Job, by Moses and Baruch; where he will find anything half so sweet, so tender and pathetic, as the exhortations of Moses to the Israelites; or where he will discover such a perfect blending of simplicity of style with grandeur of conception as in the discourses of our Lord Jesus Christ, as related in the Gospel of St. John, where the Divinity seems to be sensibly present in every word. It is impossible to read the sacred writings with reverent and studious attention without having the mind elevated and enlarged, the imagination developed and cultivated, and, above all, the heart moved with the deepest and the holiest emotions. If we read the Scriptures carefully and constantly, we begin by degrees to acquire the Scriptural tone of thought, and to find a facility in the use of Scriptural language. We begin to clothe our own poor ideas in the language of Scripture, and they at once become sublime. The style which has been formed upon, and, so to speak, consecrated by the study of the Holy Scriptures, gives an unction to our discourse which renders it efficacious beyond our fondest hopes. As we cannot read those sacred pages without feeling a love for sanctity and truth, without feeling a desire to be better men, so, if we have read them until our style is formed upon them, and our hearts impregnated with their spirit, we shall speak with a power, at once sweet and efficacious, which we can derive from no other source. What is it that gives their force and charm to the writings of St. Bernard, and causes us to regard them almost as if they were inspired, but the fact that they are full to overflowing with Holy Scripture? The Saint had studied the Sacred Writings until he was thoroughly imbued, not only with their train of thought, but also with their mode of expression; and, in proportion as we,

in our humble measure and degree, imitate him in our devout study of the same holy book, shall we approach to the beauty of his style, to the unction of his language, and to his influence over the hearts and wills of our fellow-men, in leading them to the feet of Jesus Christ, the end and aim of all our study and of all our preaching.

Great advantage may be derived by the student of sacred eloquence from a judicious perusal of the writings of the Holy Fathers. At the same time it is probable that but few will have the opportunity, or perhaps, the inclination, to devote much time to this study. Amongst the Greek Fathers, the writings of St. Chrysostom, St. Basil, and St. Gregory Nazianzen; and, amongst the Latins, those of St. Augustine and St. Bernard will probably be found the most useful in assisting the sacred orator to form his style. Rollin remarks that any one who possesses the homilies of St. Chrysostom, and the sermons of St. Augustine upon the Old and New Testament, is amply provided with models for every kind of sermon. We would certainly wish to add St. Bernard to the list, since the devotion and unction which breathe through all his writings, and the beauty of his style, render his works of inestimable value to the sacred orator. Striking extracts from the Fathers may be found in the *Thesaurus Patrum*, but it is better, when it can be done, to go to the original sources for our reading on this head.

In the limits at our disposal it is obviously impossible to enter into a critical examination of those works in the class of secular literature which may be considered "standard," and to the perusal of which the student may safely and usefully devote his attention. There are certain works which the most learned and cultivated of all ages have unanimously concurred in viewing as "standard," and to this judgment, as we have already remarked, the young student must be content to defer. Amongst these works is Demosthenes in the Greek, and Cicero in the Latin. A

person anxious to cultivate his style could scarcely take a more effectual means of doing so than by carefully translating the orations of Cicero into good English. As regards our English authors, it will not, perhaps, be rash to assert that Shakespeare is our greatest example of whatever is beautiful and refined in thought, glowing in imagination, and strong in words. In nervous language, language which soars immeasurably above the commonplace words of ordinary men, Shakespeare is *facile princeps*. To the man who aspires to acquire a nervous style, and an idiom that shall be at once powerful and pure, we say unhesitatingly, let him study the Bible and Shakespeare; and there was very great force in the remark made by Archbishop Sharp, a distinguished dignitary of the Establishment, when he said, "There are two books which made me an Archbishop, and they were the Bible and Shakespeare." Amongst the writers of pure English of our day, we know no one who holds a higher place than the venerable Dr. Newman, and we know no works which the sacred orator can peruse with greater profit than the "Occasional Sermons," and some of the "Discourses to Mixed Congregations," of that illustrious author.

The perusal of poetry and of works of fiction is useful within certain and well-defined limits. The poetry must be *good*, such as will cultivate the imagination without sullying it, whilst the fiction is only useful in as far as it reveals the workings of the human heart, and is true to life. Anything like *indiscriminate* reading in these branches of literature is attended with so many dangers, and dangers of such deadly nature to the ecclesiastic, that the student, more especially the young one, will, if he be wise, altogether mistrust his own judgment on this subject, and be guided by the opinion of his professor, or some other discreet person, in the selection of such works in general literature as it may be useful or expedient for him to read. Whatever may be the subject

of his reading, he will above all things remember, that he is reading for the one sole end of preparing himself to be a worthy ambassador of Christ; that he may be able to preach the Gospel *cum omni imperio*, as well as with dignity and grace; that, by the worthy and efficacious use of the great instrument which Christ has deigned to place in his unworthy hands, he may not only lead his flock into the possession of eternal life, but also to the attainment of a high degree of glory in the mansions of the heavenly Jerusalem. *Ut vitam habeant, et abundantius habeant.*

SECTION III.

A COLLECTION OF USEFUL AND STRIKING MATTER.

1. Besides forming his style, there is another very practical result which the student ought to derive from his studies, and it consists in making a collection, in writing, of all those matters which he has found most striking, or best adapted for his object as a preacher, in the course of his reading. *Locos sibi comparabit*, says the great Saint Charles, *quibus auditorum animi commoveri solent ad amorem Dei.* By making a note of those matters which occur to us in our reading as most remarkable, or which seem to us to possess the greatest power of moving the heart and influencing the will, we lay up for ourselves a precious store from which we shall be able, in our need, to draw abundant materials for our sermons. We thus turn to account, and render useful for all our future life, the public lectures at which we may assist, or the course of private study and reading to which we have devoted our attention. In this way nothing is lost, but everything which an intelligent precaution deems fitting for such a purpose, is placed in reserve for future use. Without some such plan we shall certainly lose the fruit of the greatest part of our reading, and of those vivid impres-

sions which may have been made upon us. At the time we are composing our sermon we very often remember to have read, or to have heard something very useful upon the subject in hand. But what was it? Where did we hear it, or in what work shall we find it? We neglected to make a note of it at the time, and, now, to our very great loss, we cannot recall it to our mind. Perhaps, too, we remember to have been deeply moved by some reflections which, years ago, we made upon this matter. *Then*, we could, without the slightest difficulty, have written pages upon this subject which would have been full of unction and warmth. *Now*, we are cold and without feeling. *Now*, we are in absolute poverty, and we would give a good deal to be able to remember what it was which moved us so much in those former days, when, perhaps, our imagination was fresher, when our heart was warmer, when its best impulses were more easily stirred. But, we allowed the precious thoughts to pass away without making note or comment on them, and, so, we must be content at present to put up with our poverty and indigence, feeling all the while that we allowed a great means of moving the hearts of our fellow-men, and of thus advancing the interests of Him whose ambassadors we are, to pass away without turning it to profit or account.

This "making of notes" on our reading, this collection of matter, supposes some amount of labour, and hence, perhaps, these remarks will not bear much practical fruit. At the same time let the young reader be convinced that, if he is to attain any degree of excellence as a preacher, it will only be by the same means by which excellence is attained in every other science or art, a good deal of hard study and of hard labour. If he is to reach the goal he must fit himself for the running. If he is to carry off the prize he must be content to pay the price.

We have the authority of many learned and holy men on this point. The learned Pope Saint Damasus regarded as

so much lost time that which he spent in reading of which he did not take notes. *Lectionem sine stylo somnium puta.* The great St. Charles, the example of all that is holy and becoming in an ecclesiastic, had an immense collection of "notes," and in the preface to his Homilies he confesses that they were of the greatest assistance to him in helping him to write and to vary his instructions. The rules of the Society of Jesus, so full of the deepest and most practical wisdom, prescribe this collecting of matter to preachers. St. Francis Xavier, one of the most illustrious members of the order, thus speaks on this point. "Be assured," he says, "that what we commit to paper is imprinted more deeply on the mind; the very trouble of writing it, and the time which is spent in doing so, engrave the matter on the memory. Be assured too," he continues, "that even those matters which move us most deeply are very soon forgotten. They will leave no lasting fruit behind them if we do not, whilst our ideas are still fresh, make a note of them, so that we can refresh our memory with them when necessity requires. The fruit which we derive from a perusal of our note books is like that of miners who come again upon some vein of precious metal which they had lost, and which, now that they have refound it, they work with the greatest profit and advantage." Words as full of practical wisdom as they are of truth! One of the most remarkable things in the late illustrious and gifted Cardinal Wiseman, and one which caused most astonishment, was the facility with which he could, at very short notice, and with an amount of information and depth of thought which were truly surprising, lecture upon almost any given subject, upon any branch of science or art, sacred or profane. The fact is not so very wonderful, or, to speak more correctly, it is more easily understood, if what was related to us be true, viz., that from his earliest years he was accustomed to read with pencil in hand, making notes as he went along, no matter what might be the subject

of his reading, of everything that struck him as worthy of being remembered. In this way he collected an immense mass of materials which his powerful intellect, his great grasp of mind, and his command of language, enabled him to turn to ready account, even on the shortest notice. Of what use this course of studious reading enabled him to be to his fellow-men; what dignity it added to his office; what lustre it shed upon his Church; and, best of all, what glory it brought to God, we shall not presume to say; but we think we may safely venture to propose him to the student as an example of what may be done by study, and of the glorious prize which may be gained by him who, with a pure intention and a valiant heart, does not shrink from paying the price of it.

2. There are many methods of taking these "notes." Experience will probably suggest to each one that which suits him best. M. Hamon of S. Sulpice, in his valuable "*Traité de la Predication*," throws out the following useful suggestions:—

1. To have a note book, and at the top of each page to inscribe some heading in alphabetical order, as, ex. gr. Abstinence, Baptism, Charity, etc., etc. Under its respective heading the student is to make a note of whatever he may meet with which is most striking on this subject, whether he comes across it in his reading, hears it in a sermon, or from whatever source he may derive his information. 2. If the student think it worth his while to make notes of all that he reads, he ought to have one book especially set aside for the insertion of notes which have peculiar reference to preaching. 3. There is no necessity for writing out at full length passages from the Scriptures or the Fathers. It is loss of time to do more than note the place where they may be found. 4. We should make notes of those matters merely which are specially worthy of being remembered. If we have reason to fear that we have been led away by a false

brilliancy, it is well to wait a little while, and to reconsider the matter at a cooler moment, before we make a note of it. 5. When some passage or reflection which we wish to note moved us in a particular manner, it is always useful to profit by this moment of inspiration to commit to writing the sentiments by which we were affected, and the practical resolutions which we took in consequence of them. We are never so eloquent as in the moments when we are thus penetrated with, and full of, our subject. The language of such moments is the true language of the heart, and it will not fail to have its due effect when applied to our fellow-men.

The *Thesaurus Biblicus*, the *Thesaurus Patrum*, and, perhaps best of all, the *Instructissima Bibliotheca Manualis Concionatoria* of Father Lohner, contain most valuable notes on subjects useful to preachers, and are excellent models of the manner in which to make these collections of materials. Every one should, however, strive to collect matter for himself. Nothing will be so useful to him as that which is the fruit of his own labour, which is the reflection of his turn of thought and of the temper of his mind, which is, in one word, *his own.*

SECTION IV.

THE PRACTICE OF COMPOSITION.

By a course of studious reading, and a diligent "noting" of whatever strikes us as most remarkable, we do much towards forming our style, as well as towards laying up that fund of knowledge which is absolutely necessary for him who is to be a successful speaker. But it is not sufficient to read much. It is still more essential for him who aspires to acquire a good style, and a correct and elegant manner of expressing himself, *to write much. Caput est*, says Cicero

treating of this matter, *quamplurimum scribere.** The advantage of frequent composition can scarcely be overrated. It is quite possible for him who has once learnt how to write well, and who has, by practice in composition, acquired a facility of expressing himself with correctness and elegance, to become a good extempore preacher. We venture to say that he who has not first learnt how to write well will hardly ever, if ever, become a really good speaker. He may acquire a certain fluency, but he will seldom attain that degree of grammatical correctness, and that measure of polish and elegance, which mark the man of education, and which his flock and the Church have a right to expect in the preacher of the Gospel. Hence it is, that in the course of studies through which we put the young aspirants to the sacred ministry, we insist so much upon this practice of composition, upon the writing of sermons. We do so because we are most deeply convinced that we can never prepare those who have been entrusted to us as a precious charge to be trained for the work of the sacred ministry—those who, as they are now the objects of our dearest aspirations and our highest hopes, are, hereafter, to be our glory and our crown—to speak well in the future, unless we first teach them how to write well. And, if this were merely our own opinion, it might not be of much weight. It has been the opinion of all who, from Aristotle and Cicero downwards, have been most competent to speak on this point. By the practice of careful composition not only do we discover our faults, whether of grammar or of style; but, whilst we force ourselves to correctness and precision, we also gain the clearest insight into our own minds, and discover the treasures which may, perchance, be hidden there. A man, at all events a young man, never knows what is really in his mind, the extent of his knowledge, the logical connection of his ideas, the force of his

* De Orat. lib. i., c. xxxiii.

reasoning powers, the depth of his sympathies and emotions, until he begins to write. Under whatever aspect he may view the practice of composition, whether as a means of acquiring mere correctness, of attaining elegance and beauty of style, or, of educating and developing the latent powers of his mind and heart, let the young student be convinced that the words of Cicero are pregnant with wisdom and truth, *Caput est, quamplurimum scribere.*

It is difficult to lay down definite rules upon this matter. Practice, under the eye of a competent professor, is perhaps the most efficacious means of advancing; but we venture to throw out a few practical hints which may be useful to those who do not enjoy this privilege.

1. After having thoroughly studied and dissected, by means of analysis, in the manner described at page 25, the composition of some standard writer, it is most useful, whilst our mind is full of the subject, to rewrite the whole matter, and then compare our production with the original of our author. There is scarcely any exercise which is more useful than this in opening the mind, in developing and cultivating the taste, in affording us a practical application of the rules and precepts of rhetoric, and, thus, of imprinting them most deeply on the memory.

2. Another method of composing, more simple and perhaps not less useful, consists in reading attentively a page or two of some standard writer, and in such a manner as to "possess" his principal ideas. Then, laying aside the book, the student endeavours to reproduce those ideas in writing, and in the most correct language of which he is master. He endeavours to seize the author's form of expression, his grace, his precision and strength, the figures which he employs, and the turn of his thoughts. Taking up his book again, he compares his page or two with those of his model. Thus, easily and without much labour, he discovers the faults of his own composition, and the particular in which he has failed most;

whilst the excellencies of his model are more and more deeply engraven on his mind. Many learned men counsel us to endeavour to express in our own language the most beautiful and striking passages of Holy Writ, of the Fathers, and of other standard authors. The efforts which we make to render our original correctly, to preserve his grace, his colour, and his form, cause us to do our utmost that we may become penetrated with his beauty, that we may think and speak as he thinks and speaks, that we may appropriate (in a sense to be presently explained) his style and his turn of thought. In one word, it causes us to wrestle, so to speak, with our model, and, in this wrestling, to have recourse to all the resources which language affords us; and, thus, after a little time, we acquire a fecundity of ideas, and a facility of expression, which probably astonish even ourselves. Cicero tells us that the most effective means which he employed in his study of eloquence consisted in translating some of the choicest morsels of the great Grecian orators into his own language. This exercise is indeed most useful, but we must take great care to choose a good model, otherwise we run the risk of spoiling our style instead of forming it.

The imitation of good models, whether in writing or in speaking, is of the highest utility. Good models inspire us with ardour, emulation, and a keen desire of excellence. According to Quintilian, a great part of art is placed in the imitation of good models, in discovering what is most perfect in them, in penetrating the abundance and the riches of their compositions, the variety of their figures, and the general characteristics of their style. Whilst it is true that a preacher may do much towards forming his style by a judicious imitation of good and great models, it is equally true that this imitation, whether of writers or speakers, is full of danger, and requires a very great deal of discretion in its use. In the first place, mere imitation is worse than

useless, and is altogether unworthy of a man If a man is ever to acquire any degree of excellence as a preacher, it must be by developing what is his own, and not by the slavish imitation of any other person. We have already said that every man of mind thinks and expresses himself, to some extent, in a manner which is peculiarly his own. A man will be a great man just in proportion as he is, in this sense, an original man. At the same time, there is no genius so original that it may not be profited by the aid of good examples in composition, style, and delivery. But, in our imitation of good models, it is above all things necessary to preserve and carefully cultivate whatever we may have in ourselves that is original and peculiarly our own. Each one has his own peculiar characteristic which distinguishes him from others. Each one has his own manner of conceiving a subject, of revolving it in his mind, and of giving expression to his thoughts and sentiments; and the greatest men have only attained their respective degrees of perfection by developing their own characteristic qualities, by cultivating that speciality which nature has given them, and by turning it to the very best account. It is a grand secret to know ourselves, and to adapt our style to our own speciality. We do not study good models in order that we may steal from them what is peculiarly *theirs*, and what may be in nowise suited either to *our* temperament or *our* style; but we study them in order that we may derive from their more matured experience, and their greater excellence, the means of developing in ourselves those peculiar qualities which they may seem to share, to some extent, with us. In this sense, we endeavour to appropriate whatever we consider most excellent in them, by making it our own. Such imitation is certain to open some new ideas, certain to enlarge and purify our own, to give new vigour to the current of our thoughts, and greater depth to the emotions of our heart. We behold, for example, certain peculiar qualities in a great orator, and

we feel that we possess the same, but, with this difference, that he possesses them in a higher degree, and expresses them with more power than we are able to do. We endeavour to penetrate his secret, and to discover the source of his excellence. Having done so, we strive, not to steal what is his, but to make it our own; and, by transferring it to our own souls, to cause it to aid us in developing and raising to the highest degree of perfection our peculiar and characteristic qualities; those qualities, be they of head or of heart, of cold logic or of warm sympathies and deep emotions, which distinguish us from other men; those special qualities and characteristics whose cultivation is to be the foundation of whatever degree of greatness or excellence we are to attain. It is, then, of the last importance to discover our peculiar gift, our peculiar turn of mind; to find out whether we are most moved to act upon our fellow-men through reason or through feeling; to ascertain whether our peculiar forte lies in argument or in passion, and to make all our oratorical studies, and all our imitation of great models, tend to the one sole end, the cultivation of our peculiar gift, whatever it may be. If we mistake it, or, if we devote ourselves to the cultivation of any other than our own proper talent, we shall never rise to greatness, we shall never attain that degree of excellence which the dignity of the pulpit demands at our hands. If we have received the gift of "convincing" by deep and logical argument, it would be a great mistake to quit this style in order to cultivate that of him whose excellence lies in his warm and brilliant imagination. If we have received a great power of "moving," and of stirring the hearts of men, it would be a fatal error to strive after the style of the grave theologian who attains his end by severe reasoning and dry dissertation. He who is able to speak well, so long as he confines himself to simplicity of style and of matter, must be content with that degree of perfection which is marked out for him, and not seek to attain heights which are beyond his

reach. How many ecclesiastics throw away the *real* talent which they possess in their vain efforts to acquire some degree of excellence which is above their grasp, and to which they are not called. How many, whose success would have been complete if they had confined themselves to *familiar instructions*, have rendered themselves useless, perhaps ridiculous, in their efforts to preach *grand* sermons. How many, in aspiring to become orators, without having been born for it, have ended by becoming mere declaimers. Such as these may fitly apply to themselves the words of David when he had clothed himself in the armour of Saul, *non possum incedere quia usum non habeo.** If we are called to do battle for God with the heavy weapons of Saul, let us gird them on, and use them like men. If we are not, let us be content to wage our war in a more humble way. Like David, we may gain a victory by means of the simple pebble, which would never have graced our arms if we had striven to fight with the sword of Saul.

It is scarcely necessary to add that it is never lawful *to copy*. We may lawfully, and often usefully, borrow the ideas and the proofs of a writer; but, before employing them, we must make them our own by studying them so deeply that at length we conceive them in our own way, and express them in our own words, and in our own peculiar style. He who uses the words of another, without stating whence he borrows them, is simply a pirate. If he does so habitually, he takes the most effectual means he could devise of betraying his own want of genius, or, if he really possess any, of destroying it. It will be well if he do not end by making himself ridiculous, and by bringing disgrace upon himself and his ministry. As we have said, no two men think alike. If this be true, it follows pretty evidently, that no man can express himself *naturally* in another man's words. The preacher who is not *natural* will hardly escape being *ridiculous*.

* Reg. xvii. 19.

We have dwelt at some length on this matter of remote preparation, because, having had some considerable experience in training young men for the work of the ministry, we have had many practical proofs of its necessity; because we have had to contend with the almost insuperable difficulties which have met us when it has been wanting; and, because we believe and know it to be the foundation of any real excellence which the Christian preacher may attain.

CHAPTER III.

PROXIMATE PREPARATION FOR PREACHING.

E now proceed to consider the proximate preparation for preaching, or, in other words, the actual composition of our sermon. We shall divide this part of our subject into two great leading heads. The first will contain four sections. I. The choice of a subject. II. The due consideration and meditation of that subject. III. The arrangement of our matter by means of the *plan* of our discourse, including, IV. Some remarks on Unity. The second will treat of the various parts or members of a discourse, with the revision, and committing to memory, of what we have written.

SECTION I.

THE CHOICE OF A SUBJECT.

It is very important to make a good selection of the subject on which we intend to preach. The subject is the foundation of our discourse, and unless the materials of that foundation be discreetly chosen and well adapted to their purpose, the edifice will scarcely be either sound or pleasing. As an ordinary rule, the subject of his Sunday's sermon will be marked out to the pastor, either by the Gospel of the day, the recurrence of any great festival, or, by some peculiar circumstance in his parish, as the prevalence of a certain vice, etc., etc. However, whatever be the circumstances in which he may be placed, there are certain practical rules to

be observed in the selection of his subject, and the manner in which he will treat it. 1. He must not allow himself to be influenced by self-love in the choice of his subject. Self-love will be sure to suggest those subjects which admit of the most display and of the highest flights of oratory. The true pastor of souls will rather be influenced by the thought of what will be most useful to his flock, and he will select those subjects which he deems most conducive to their salvation, those subjects by which he can most easily *instruct*, *move*, and *convert* his people, since this is the end of his preaching. As a natural consequence, he will take the greatest care to adapt his subject to the peculiar circumstances of his flock, to their wants, their dispositions, their capacity, their prejudices, the time and place in which he addresses them. It is evident that no discourse can be of any lasting service unless it be thus adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the congregation to which it is addressed. 2. Amongst many subjects which would be useful, he will always, when the selection is in his hands, choose that which he deems, *omnibus pensatis*, the most useful to the *majority* of his congregation. Such subjects are the Four Last Things, the Sacraments, the Commandments of God and his Church, and all those great leading truths of our faith which essentially interest all men at all times. He can never preach too often on the great evil of sin and its terrible chastisements in this world and the next; on the madness of those who are restrained from vice neither by the judgments of God, the eternal sufferings of hell, nor the loss of heaven; on the benefits of redemption; on the dignity of a Christian; on the obligation of forgiving injuries, and of flying the occasions of sin; on the obligation of prayer, its advantages, and the conditions required to render it acceptable with God; the duty of alms-giving; the crime of human respect; the abuse of grace; the loss of time, etc., etc. The preacher should not allow himself to be restrained from preaching on these

subjects by the consideration that they are old and have been often treated before. The man who is truly zealous, and who honestly prepares himself for his work, can always present these old, indeed these eternal truths, in a new way; in such a way as to be full of interest to those who are to secure their eternal salvation by the practice of these old truths. Let him remember, *Non debemus dicere nova, sed nové.* Let him be convinced, too, that his flock, distracted and taken up as they are by the cares, the allurements, and the sins of the world, easily forget even the most elementary truths. Let him be convinced that they require, the rich as well as the poor, those who are well up in the world's knowledge and education equally with the unlettered and the ignorant, to be frequently instructed in these elementary truths, to be no less frequently admonished, *in omni patientia et doctrina*, of those obligations and duties which flow from them. 3. Whilst he selects those subjects which he deems most useful to the majority of his flock, the discreet pastor will, as far as circumstances permit, also select those which are best adapted to his own peculiar style and natural talent. If, for example, he have a peculiar power of moving souls through the consideration of the mercy and the goodness of God, he will seldom essay to speak on Hell and those terrible subjects in which so few succeed, and which, unless they are powerfully handled, are perhaps better let alone. He will also avoid subjects which are too prolix, and which oblige the preacher to glance at many matters without really or thoroughly entering into any one. 4. Having fixed upon his subject, the preacher will next determine the peculiar points of view under which it will be most useful to present it to his flock, the practical conclusions to be urged upon them, the way in which the reform of such a vice, or the practice of such a virtue, is to be brought about. The practice of virtue is sometimes proposed to a flock in such a manner as to make it appear full of difficulties, disagreeable

and repugnant; whilst it might, with a little more trouble and the aid of a little more discretion, have been brought before their eyes as infinitely reasonable in itself, infinitely beautiful and grand, infinitely useful to those who faithfully adopt it. The discreet pastor will always carefully study how he may present it in this latter light to his flock. For this end he will examine how he can best bring it before them in such a manner as to suit their present dispositions; the aspect of the question which will be most pleasing to them, and most readily win their acceptance of his views. Above all things, he will, from the first moment of fixing upon his subject, begin to ask himself that question, the answer to which is to secure the unity and practical usefulness of his discourse: What is it that I am going to propose to my congregation? What am I about to ask of them? By what means do I expect to gain my end?

SECTION II.

THE MEDITATION AND CONCEPTION OF OUR SUBJECT.

After having selected our subject, and determined the points of view under which we shall treat it, the next step in our preparation is to ponder it deeply and with all the powers of our mind. To meditate our subject is to place ourselves face to face with it, to study and sift it to the bottom, to look at it in all its different aspects until we become, so to speak, irradiated with it; until we see at a glance how we can make it most effectually conduce to the instruction, the conviction, the persuasion, and the amendment of our flock. 1st. How we can make it conduce to their instruction—and, for this end, we examine what is said upon the matter in theology, and whilst we form clear, precise, and exact ideas, on what we may call the doctrinal part of our subject, we also consider the best means of conveying these ideas to our audience. 2ndly. How we can make it conducive to the

convincing of their understanding—and, for this purpose, we study what proofs and what line of argument are likely to make most impression upon them, and we endeavour, by deep and serious reflection, to become so intimately penetrated with our subject, so intimately convinced of its truth and its reasonableness, as to be filled with wonder at the folly of those who do not at once give in their assent to it. 3rdly. How we can make it conduce to their persuasion—and, for this, having instructed and convinced our audience by argument—we consider how we can most powerfully act upon their souls, and influence their wills; what strokes of oratory we can employ to move, to soften, and to gain them, and what we can say that shall go at once to their hearts. We consider how we can bring Holy Scripture to our aid, how we can turn to the best account the examples of the saints, the views of faith, and our knowledge of the human heart. We also consider what figures of rhetoric, as, for example, apostrophe, personification, interrogation, etc., etc., will be of most assistance to us in moving our audience, and the manner in which these figures shall be employed. 4thly. How we can make it conducive to their amendment—and to this end, having seen, in a general way, how we are to persuade our audience, we descend still more to particulars, and ask ourselves what we are going to propose to our flock that is really practical and to the point, what acts of virtue and what salutary practices we are about to impress upon them; in one word, how we are going to correct what is amiss in them, how we are going to lead them into the path of sanctity and perfection.

Some such process as this, which we have endeavoured to sketch, is what is meant by the meditation of our subject, and it is recommended by all great masters of the art as an essential condition of every good composition. Without such serious consideration we shall speak at best but superficially, often inexactly. Our discourse will be nothing but

a heap of cold and pointless ideas; a mass of texts and immature reflections. We shall be obscure, because, as we have not taken the trouble to study our subject, we shall possess no clear and well defined ideas upon it. We shall be cold, inasmuch as neither our heart nor our imagination will have been inflamed in the furnace of deep and earnest meditation. We shall be diffuse, because we shall advance without order, like a traveller in a strange country. By due meditation of our subject on the contrary, we become masters of it, and fully possess it. Possessing it clearly, we announce and develope it with ease and facility. Our intellect supplies us with the clearest proofs, our heart with the deepest emotions, and our imagination with the richest and most varied figures. The most telling expressions, the most striking and original turns of thought, and the most appropriate figures, present themselves, as it were instinctively to us, and it is thus that the best style flows out from its natural source, and the greatest beauties which can adorn a sermon spring without effort from the subject itself.

There are two methods of meditating our subject, the *direct* and the *indirect*. If we happen to be persons of great intellect, persons possessing a deep store of information, and a grasp of mind which enables us to turn that information to ready and practical account, or, if circumstances prevent us from employing any other, we may use the direct method, which consists in placing ourselves at once face to face with our subject, in bringing all the powers of our mind to bear upon it until we become penetrated with it, until we see it in all its aspects, until, especially, we behold at a glance the precise manner in which it is to be brought to act upon those whom we are about to address; and thus viewing it, in itself and in its relation to our audience, we at last, to use the words of the Abbé Bautain,* *conceive our subject*, and, in this conception, obtain the leading idea of our discourse, the idea

* The Art of Extempore Speaking.

that is to be embodied in the one proposition, the proving and the establishing of which is the end and aim of our sermon, as we shall show a little later on when treating of unity. This *direct* method of meditating and conceiving our subject is a purely intellectual process in the sense that it supposes no actual reading up of matter, no collection of materials but what is supplied on the spur of the moment from the granary of our own mind, and beaten into shape and applied to our subject through the mere force of our own intellect, unaided by the knowledge or the experience of others. From this idea of it, it follows we think pretty plainly, that only the possession of great genius, or necessity, will justify the preacher who, as a rule, aspires to, and contents himself with, this direct mode of considering and conceiving his subject.

Ordinary men must be content to follow a more laborious and circuitous way than this. There are few men who are sufficiently well up in sacred science, or whose knowledge is sufficiently fresh and accurate, to enable them to sit down at once and compose their sermon, without some previous revision and reading up of matter. Such men must employ the *indirect* method of meditating and conceiving their subject. This consists in reading, pencil in hand, some approved writer on the subject which we have selected to treat. This lecture instructs us on those points on which we may be ignorant, and refreshes our memory on those which we had begun to forget. It awakens and fertilizes the imagination, excites our zeal, inspires us with conceptions that are full of life, and sets the spirit of invention in full play. This course of reading is very different from the one described in the preceding chapter. *Then*, we read in order to form our style; *now*, we read in order to acquire matter, and an insight into the most striking way of presenting it, with a view to the actual composition of our discourse. Hence, in our present reading, we propose to ourselves to sift our subject

to the very bottom, in order that we may put ourselves in a position to give sound, solid, and exact instruction upon it to our flock. We not only seek out and make *substantial notes* of all those ideas, passages, and practical applications, with which we meet in our reading, but, we endeavour still more to master and possess the general order of the discourse, the way in which the various ideas are brought out, presented, and connected with those which precede and those which follow. We study the figures, the comparisons, the strong and vigorous expressions which give such life to those ideas, and, in a word, everything which adds nerve, force, and beauty to the discourse. We endeavour to enter fully into the spirit of the writer, that thus our heart and our imagination may be equally set on fire, that we may, so to speak, be inspired by our subject. All this supposes, of course, that we know where to look for standard matter on our subject, and that we read with deep and serious attention, making short, but lucid and substantial, notes as we go along of everything that strikes us as peculiarly useful either to *instruct*, to *convince*, or to *move* our audience. We read in this manner until, to use a homely phrase, we feel full of our subject. Then, laying aside our book, we take up the notes which we have made during our reading, and re-read them face to face with our subject. We ponder seriously before God on what we have read and the notes we have made, always of course in relation with our subject; and, whilst through this deep meditation we become fully possessed of our matter, and make it, in the truest sense, our own, we at the same time conceive our subject in the manner described above, and obtain the clearest view of that which is to be the leading idea of our discourse, that idea or truth which, as we have said, is to be embodied in our proposition, and to the establishing of which all our efforts are to be directed.

This indirect method of considering and conceiving our subject is a little more laborious than the other, but it is

vastly safer. Moreover, a little practice and a little perseverance will not only render it easy, but as pleasing as it, most certainly, will be useful.

Having thus fixed upon our subject, and having considered it well and deeply in the manner described above, we are now ready to proceed to the next stage of our preparation, viz., the arrangement of our matter by means of a clear, definite, and well-organized plan.

SECTION III.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF OUR MATTER BY MEANS OF THE PLAN OF OUR DISCOURSE.

We have collected the substantial materials of which our discourse is to be composed. We have made a note of everything which occurred to us during our reading as peculiarly striking or useful for the purpose we have in hand. We have under our eye all the texts of Holy Writ, the extracts from the Fathers, the theological reasons, the proofs, the arguments, in a word, everything which our intellect, our heart, or our course of reading has suggested to us; and, up to this point, we have made good progress. We possess abundant materials with which to construct our edifice, but we possess them in a confused mass, without order, regularity, or design; and, as no amount of wood and stone would suffice to raise a material edifice unless they were put in order, and arranged according to the plan of the architect, so, no amount or collection of matter will enable a pastor to preach a good sermon unless that matter be properly arranged, unless everything be put in its proper place and reduced to order. There is no way of reducing this mass of materials to order, except by taking our pen in hand, and, before we begin to compose our sermon, making a good *plan*, or skeleton, of our discourse. The plan of a discourse is, according to M. Bautain, *the order of the things*

which have to be unfolded. It supposes, therefore, the *matter* to be unfolded, and this we have already collected in a confused mass, and the *order* in which that matter is to be unfolded. Simple as all this may seem, its importance can scarcely be exaggerated. There is scarcely anything which is more overlooked by ordinary preachers, and we venture to say that the utter failure of so many sermons is to be attributed neither to poverty of matter, nor defects of style and delivery, so much as to the prevailing want of order and method, and the consequent absence of any definite end, aim, or object in the discourses to which we listen. How many preachers are there who more than justify Dr. Whately's biting criticism! "Many a wandering discourse one hears in which the preacher aims at nothing, and hits it." And, what is the practical consequence of this? Why, that as the preacher had no clear idea of *what* he wished to say, or of the order in which he wished to say it, his flock have still less recollection of what he *did* say. They carry away from his sermon no clear, definite ideas on any one point, on any virtue to be practised and the manner of practising it, for the very simple reason that the discourse neither contained nor enunciated any such ideas. The preacher, indeed, may have glanced, in his confused and disorderly manner, at *many* things, but he has entered thoroughly into *none.* He has driven no *one* truth home to the hearts of his flock, as he should have proposed to himself to do, remembering that ordinary people scarcely remember more than *one* thing at a time. An hour after his sermon, he himself could scarcely tell you the precise subject on which he preached, the one idea which he strove to write on the hearts of his flock, and the order and method by which he proposed to accomplish his end; and, for the best of reasons, because he had no such idea or method. What wonder, then, if that flock have long since forgotten the sermon which he himself no longer recollects, for the obvious reason that he never fully possessed or

clearly expressed it. Such sermons, and would that they were fewer, to use a very homely but pointed expression, go in at one ear and out at the other. And, what is the sad end of all this, except that his flock listen, Sunday after Sunday, to his sermons, without obtaining one solid morsel of sound and lasting instruction, without conceiving one generous resolution of advancing in God's holy service; whilst he, as he witnesses the scandals which are for ever showing their foul front in his parish, is obliged to confess, in the bitterness of his heart, that his ministry is a barren and a fruitless one; that his words fall on a hard soil, a soil which, if he did but realize it, is only hard from want of cultivation; that he is but as one who beats the air with empty words; that he is but as the tinkling brass and the sounding cymbal; the unthrifty husbandman, who spends his whole life in sowing bad and unfruitful seed which never yields the increase.

There is no way of meeting this great and common failing of ordinary sermons, except by making a good plan of one's discourse. The fundamental quality of every good plan is *unity* which we now proceed to consider.

SECTION IV.

UNITY.

By the unity of a discourse we mean that everything in it tends to the establishing of some *one*, *precise*, and *clearly defined* proposition which we propose to ourselves to impress so deeply upon the hearts of our hearers that they cannot possibly escape the practical conclusions which we deduce from it; and, that all the proofs, examples, illustrations, etc., which our sermon contains have reference to the development of the *one*, great, leading truth which is embodied in this proposition.

Unity comprises two things, unity of *view*, and unity of *means*. There is unity of *view* in a discourse when everything in it tends to the one common end; when there is not a phrase in the sermon which is not expressed except with this object, and which is not either necessary or useful in conducting our audience to it; when, in fine, from this common end as from a central point, we can take in the whole sermon, with all its ramifications, at a glance of the eye. Unity of view imparts this remarkable property to a discourse, that it reduces it to *one* leading proposition, which is merely brought out into greater relief by the *various ways* in which it may be presented to an audience; or, rather, as Fenelon expresses it, the discourse is merely the development of the proposition, and the proposition is nothing more than an abridgment of the discourse. There is unity of *means* in a discourse when all its parts are so united, connected, and arranged, that the preacher advances continually on the same line of progressive conceptions, when it is one tissue of ideas and sentiments which beget and follow one another. In this way everything is in its proper place; each truth prepares the way for, introduces, and sustains some other truth which has equal need of its support; and, thus, they all unite to conduct the audience to the common end in such a manner, and with such an intimate and close connection, that no one of these leading ideas can be *omitted* without destroying the order of the march, no one *misplaced* without weakening the force, and deranging the harmony, of the whole discourse.

It is scarcely necessary to prove how essential this unity is to every good discourse. We have already glanced at the evil consequences arising from its absence in a sermon. Certainly, unity of view is necessary, since everything in a discourse which does not tend to the common end and design, which the preacher necessarily proposes to himself, is merely thrown away. Disconnected and disjointed ideas which have no direct reference to the leading truth laid

down in the proposition only distract the hearer. However ignorant he may be, he is offended at having extraneous matters thrust upon his notice, which merely cause him to lose sight of the leading idea and principal subject of the discourse. He listens with annoyance and impatience to that which even his limited intelligence perceives to have no definite connection with the subject in hand. He looks upon the preacher as a traveller who has either forgotten, or who knows not, whither he is going. He thus loses all interest in the discourse, and, naturally, receives no benefit from it.

And, it is not sufficient that what we say have some relation to the general end of the discourse, and be thus comprehended, in a degree more or less vague, within the unity of view. Every idea, every sentence that we utter, must be expressed in its proper place; or, in other words, *unity of means* is no less essential than unity of view. What is it that makes a grand edifice? It is not a great mass of stones and materials, nor the heaping together of many parts without reference to the whole; but it is the just proportion of the various fabrics to one another, and their due arrangement so as to form one harmonious whole. And, again, to use the figure of Quintilian, what is it that makes a strong and vigorous body, but the union and perfect agreement of all the members. Displace but one member and the beautiful body becomes a monster. It is the same in a sermon. Its strength and its beauty arise, not from disconnected and disunited members, no matter how elegant they may be in themselves, but from the intimate relation, and the perfect agreement, of one part to another and to the whole. Its beauty lies in the skilful and proper placing of each proof and of each idea, in the order and coherence of those ideas, which are so connected and knit together that no one can be omitted without causing a fatal gap, without destroying the vitality of the whole. In one word, the vigor and harmony of

a discourse depend principally upon the order with which it is arranged, and the more orderly and definite it is the more perfect it is. Hence, if each idea, each truth, each argument, be not placed in its proper position, the preacher will say at the commencement that which ought not to have come in until the middle or end of his discourse. He will finish where he ought to have begun, or *vice versa.* If there be not a strict and logical sequence of ideas, of proofs, and of arguments in a sermon, it is essentially faulty. Such a discourse is without unity, that unity which, according to St. Augustine, is the principle and the form of everything that is beautiful. *Omnis pulchritudinis forma unitas est.** Without unity there can be no order, without order in a sermon, as in everything else, there can be nothing but darkness and confusion.

To secure this essential unity, and its natural results, definiteness of view and orderly arrangement, the preacher, according to the advice of St. Francis de Sales, should never enter the pulpit without a definite design of adding some definite stone to the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem; that is to say, he ought always to propose to himself the obtaining of some definite end which shall be conducive to the salvation of his audience, and, for this purpose, he should say to himself, What is it precisely that I wish to gain from my hearers? What reform, what pious practice, what special virtue, do I aspire to inculcate? With what dispositions, with what generous and specific resolutions, do I seek to animate them? If he do not see the answer to this question, as clear and definite as the question itself, he may be pretty certain that his discourse will be vague, confused, and to a great extent, useless. Dr. Newman thus writes on this matter.†

"My second remark is, that it is the preacher's duty to aim at imparting to others, not any fortuitous, unpremedi-

* I. Epis. xviii. † University Preaching.

tated benefit, but some *definite* spiritual good. It is here that design and study find their place; the more exact and precise is the subject of which he treats, the more impressive and practical will he be; whereas no one will carry off much from a discourse which is on the general subject of virtue, or vaguely and feebly entertains the question of the desirableness of attaining Heaven, or the rashness of incurring eternal ruin."

"Nay, I would go the length," he continues, "of recommending a preacher to place a distinct categorical proposition before him, such as he can write down in a form of words, and to guide and limit his preparation by it, and to aim in all he says to bring it out, and nothing else. This seems to be implied or suggested in St. Charles's direction: 'Id omnino studebit, ut quod in concione dicturus est, antea *bene cognitum* habeat.' Nay, is it not expressly conveyed in the Scripture phrase of 'preaching the *word?*' for what is meant by 'the word,' but a proposition addressed to the intellect? Nor will a preacher's earnestness show itself in anything more unequivocally, than in his rejecting, whatever be the temptation to admit it, every remark, however original, every period, however eloquent, which does not in some way or other tend to bring out this one distinct proposition which he has chosen. Nothing is so fatal to the effect of a sermon, as the habit of preaching on three or four subjects at once. I acknowledge I am advancing a step beyond the practice of great Catholic preachers, when I add, that, even though we preach on only one at a time, finishing and dismissing the first before we go to the second, and the second before we go to the third, still, after all, a practice like this, though not open to the inconvenience which confusing of one subject with another involves, is in matter of fact nothing short of the delivery of three sermons in succession without break between them.

"Summing up then what I have been saying, I observe

that, if I have understood the doctrine of St. Charles, St. Francis, and other saints aright, *definiteness of object* is in various ways the one virtue of the preacher;—and this means, that he should set out with the intention of conveying to others some spiritual benefit; that, with a view to this, and as the only ordinary way to it, he should select some distinct fact or scene, some passage in history, some truth, simple or profound, some doctrine, some principle, or some sentiment, and should study it well and thoroughly, and first make it his own, or should have already dwelt on it and mastered it, so as to be able to use it for the occasion, from an habitual understanding of it; and that then he should employ himself, as the one business of his discourse, to bring home to others, and to leave deep within them, what he has, before he began to speak to them, brought home to himself. What he feels himself, and feels deeply, he has to make others feel deeply; and, in proportion as he comprehends this, he will rise above the temptation of introducing collateral matters, and will have no taste, no heart, for going aside after flowers of oratory, fine figures, tuneful periods, which are worth nothing, unless they come to him spontaneously, and are spoken 'out of the abundance of the heart.'"

Yes, what *great*, *leading*, *practical* truth is it which I wish to write upon the hearts of my people? This is the question which the preacher will revolve again and again in his mind, prayerfully before God, and with an intimate conviction of its vast importance. It is the point upon which the whole success of the sermon depends. The answer which he is able to make to himself on this vital question, will furnish him with the proposition of his discourse. This proposition will, therefore, embody, and briefly expose, the great leading truth which is the foundation of the sermon. But this truth, although essentially *one*, may, and perhaps ought to be presented to our audience under *various* points of view. We

may, for example, employ *many* arguments to enforce the love of God, without ever losing sight of the *one* object; whilst, if we introduce arguments into the same sermon on the love of our neighbour, we sin unpardonably against unity, and run the risk of producing no clear and definite result.

With these remarks on unity, the essential quality of every good plan, we now return to the more direct consideration of the plan itself. We have said just now that the *one* leading idea of our sermon may, and perhaps ought to be presented under *various* points of view, that it rests on two or three great leading proofs or arguments. We see at a glance, on carefully reading our notes, that all the arguments, comparisons, examples, etc., which we have collected as bearing on our subject, can easily be arranged under two or three leading heads; and, the making of the plan of our discourse is nothing more than the taking of our pen in hand, and with the principle of unity always clearly before us, the orderly arranging of our materials under these two or three leading heads. These two or three leading heads form the members of our division, or, in other words, the parts of our discourse. These leading members are in themselves, in one sense, general propositions, as they are the foundation of special arguments and oratorical developments; but, at the same time, there is such a strict coherence and connection between them and the subject, that they resolve themselves into a proposition which is still more general, to wit, that of the discourse. It is evident that the preacher, in thus arranging the plan of his sermon, advances by way of analysis, from particular ideas to general propositions. It is equally evident that, in the development of the discourse itself, he uses the synthetical method, descending from the general proposition of his discourse to the consideration of those minor propositions which are subordinate to it, but each of which, nevertheless, possesses its own proper proofs, ideas, and sentiments.

To sum up practically what we have said, the preacher will arrange the plan of his discourse in some such way as this. Having selected his subject, having meditated and conceived it in the manner already described, he will write down the proposition which embodies the leading idea of his sermon. Then, he will arrange the members of his division, or, the parts of his discourse, each one in its proper place, with its own peculiar arguments and oratorical developments briefly but clearly sketched out. Next, he will select the text of Scripture most appropriate to head his sermon. Then he will determine, from a general view of the whole discourse, what idea will most fitly introduce it; in other words, he will obtain the idea of his exordium; and, lastly, he will consider and note down, from the same general view of the whole discourse, those sentiments, powerful emotions, and generous resolutions with which he will seek to move his hearers at the close of his sermon, in other words, the matter of his peroration or conclusion.

The leading idea, embodied and exposed in the general proposition—the members or parts of the discourse—the text—the idea of the exordium and of the peroration—such are the dry bones which form the skeleton or plan of a discourse, and, although not that of the actual composition, as we shall see in another chapter, such is the order in which they will have been "invented" or conceived by the preacher.

To aid the young preacher, to render this matter still more plain, and to bring it home more practically to him, we subjoin a plan of a discourse. For obvious reasons we have selected a trite and very familiar subject. The student will perceive that merely substantial ideas are presented, whilst the rhetorical filling in of those ideas is left to each one's individual taste and style. He will also perceive at a glance that the whole subject, as embodied in the division, is reduced to a syllogism. A few words of explanation on the major of the proposition, which no one will deny, may form the

exordium or introduction. The minor furnishes the three points, or members of the discourse, whilst the peroration contains the conclusion.

PLAN OF A SERMON ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ETERNAL SALVATION.

LEADING IDEA.—The securing of his salvation should be the great object of every man's life.

TEXT. Eccles. xii. 13. Deum time et mandata ejus observa: hoc est enim omnis homo.

DIVISION.—All reasonable men labour most earnestly for that which is most worthy of their toil. Whether we consider (1) the views of God, (2) the actions of the saints, or (3) the sentiments of men at the hour of their death, we must admit that salvation is the object most worthy of the attention of every reasonable man. Therefore—

1ST POINT.—*The Views of God.*

Why did God *create* us—why does he *preserve* us—why does he bear with us in our *tepidity*—our *relapses*—our *sins*.

Why did the Son of God become *incarnate*—lead a life of *suffering*—*die upon the Cross*.

Why does the Holy Ghost continually prevent us with His graces.

That we may secure the salvation of our immortal souls.

Eccle. xii. 13.

Prov. xvi. 4.

2ND POINT.—*The Actions of the Saints.*

Why did the saints lead lives of such rigorous penance—David—Magdalene—Anthony—Basil—Mary of Egypt, and so many others.

Why did the *Martyrs* sustain the greatest tortures so cheerfully and lay down their lives so readily.

Why have so many *kings* forsaken their crown—so many *noblemen* their high station—so many *courtiers* the pomps and pleasures of a court—so many *wealthy men* their riches to lead lives of *poverty* and *mortification*.

That they might the more certainly secure the salvation of their souls.

Eccle. i.

3rd Point.—*The sentiments of Men at the Hour of Death.*

What are the sentiments of the *just* man at the hour of his death. What does he think of the *labours*—the *self-denial*—the *works of piety*—in which he has spent his life.	He is filled with joy at having done his best to save his soul. Ps. cxxi. 1.
What are the sentiments of the sinner—what does he think of *worldly pleasures — honours — riches.* What does he think of those *sins* in which he has steeped his soul —for which he has thrown away his salvation.	He is filled with horror and unavailing remorse. —Solomon. Eccle. i. 2.

Conclusion.—*Affections and Resolutions.*

Filled with *gratitude* to God who has spared us.	Ps. cxv. 12.
With *sorrow* for our past negligence.	Ps. l.
With an *intimate conviction* of its *necessity.*	Matth. xvi., 26.
We will henceforward labour with all our hearts to secure our salvation.	Ps. lxxvii. 11.
And for this end we now resolve to adopt the practical *means* of doing so, and to employ those means, *promptly, perseveringly,* and *efficaciously.*	Matth. xix. 17.

Exhortation—Prayer.

According to some such method as this will the preacher arrange the matter of his discourse. A *plan* is equally useful and equally necessary, *mutatis mutandis*, for the set sermon as for the familiar instruction. Perhaps it is most necessary in the preparation of the familiar instruction, for as this will be delivered to simple and ignorant people, there is all the greater need of order and clearness. The above plan has been made as simple as possible, but, slight as it may

seem, the preacher will find that the development of the ideas which it suggests will more than occupy the half hour which an ordinary discourse should not exceed. Being on one of the great *general* subjects which the preacher treats from time to time, the practical conclusions are more *general* than will be the case in ordinary sermons, which will of course be more particular in their nature, and more definite in their conclusions. Nevertheless, the student will perceive that in the above plan every idea which it suggests, every example, and every comparison which it points out, tends to the establishing of the *one* leading idea, the necessity of labouring to secure our eternal salvation, whilst they all prepare the way for the practical conclusions which flow from the whole argumentation on the subject—viz., the resolution to labour henceforward with all our heart to secure that salvation, and for this end, the adoption of the means suggested by the Holy Gospel.—Matt. xix. 17.

The student will remember, too, that the plan of his discourse is to be *nothing more* than a *plan*, or skeleton. It admits of no style or fine writing. All this will come later on when we begin the actual composition of our discourse. The plan is, in the strictest sense, the mere skeleton of the sermon, the rough draught which the skilful hand of the artist traces out in order to secure unity of view and of means, before he begins to fill in the rich and varied details of his composition, before he begins to clothe the dry bones with living flesh and muscle. It should be drawn out with such exactness, and with such an orderly and logical distribution of all its parts, as will enable the writer to take in at a glance the *one* end to be gained, and the *means* of gaining it. If it secure this, no matter what method he may follow in drawing it up, it is a perfect plan, and anything more than this it does not aspire to effect.

It is scarcely necessary to add that a sermon does not absolutely require to have *three*, or even *two* points. If the

time be sufficiently employed, or if the subject be sufficiently developed by one point, it would be quite useless to add more. The only thing to be borne in mind is, that, if we do employ two or three points, they must not be advanced in order to prove two or three different truths, but simply as different ways of proving and developing the *one* great truth embodied in the proposition of our discourse.

It may be useful to remark that there are many excellent works, especially in the French language, which contain skeletons or plans of sermons. The *Adjumenta Oratoris Sacri* of the Rev. Father Schouppe, S.J., lately published, is perhaps one of the most valuable and practically useful of recent publications on this matter. The plans which it contains appear to be drawn up in strict accordance with those conditions which have been laid down as essential. They are fertile in the suggestion of substantial ideas, which are left to be clothed in the peculiar language and expression of him who employs them.

CHAPTER IV.

NECESSITY OF DILIGENT PREPARATION.

SECTION I.

NECESSITY AND OBLIGATION OF DILIGENT PREPARATION.

THERE are, no doubt, occasions in which a pastor is so overwhelmed by press of business, or is called upon so unexpectedly to preach, that preparation is morally impossible. In such circumstances, excused by his necessity before God and man, he has a right to expect the assistance of heaven, and the indulgence of his hearers. With these exceptions, we have no hesitation in asserting that the pastor of souls is bound to prepare his discourses carefully, and with such an amount of diligence as will render them efficacious to their end, the salvation of his flock. If he be bound *sub gravi* to instruct his people, he must be bound to prepare himself to do so in an effective and fruitful manner, since there must be some proportion between the end and the means. It is an incontestable fact that the preacher who speaks without serious preparation, speaks, as an ordinary rule, without order or solidity. He continually repeats himself, runs off into interminable or useless digressions, and smothers his ideas under a deluge of empty verbiage. There are few preachers, more especially young ones, who venture to speak without preparation, who

do not run the risk of acquitting themselves badly, and of incurring shipwreck before the eyes of all. Besides, there are moments of sterility in which even the readiest intellect finds itself barren and cold. There are a thousand influences which may arise to discompose and cause us to lose the thread of our discourse. Sometimes an inattentive audience, sometimes an unforeseen circumstance, sometimes a troublesome imagination which obtrudes itself upon us, and, spite of all our efforts to repel it, disturbs the order of our ideas and the chain of our reasoning. Hence, the reasonableness and truth of the proverbs, *A sermon which costs the preacher little to compose costs the audience a great deal to listen to*, and, *That which costs little, is worth precisely what it costs.* Hence, we easily deduce the obligation by which the pastor is bound to prepare his discourses carefully, since, without such preparation, he runs the risk of lowering himself in the eyes of his people, and, what is much worse, of compromising his ministry.

The preacher who ascends the pulpit without preparation will scarcely escape being guilty of irreverence to the word of God. This divine word which, according to St. Augustine, merits the same respect as the body of Christ, is not to be presented to the people except in such a guise as is proper to conciliate their veneration and esteem. On the other hand, a good sermon is a difficult undertaking, and he who supposes that it can be accomplished without much patient preparation, without much reflection and labour, deludes himself most egregiously. If even those who prepare most carefully sometimes fail, what is the certain fate of those who never prepare at all? Is it any wonder if they end in talking nonsense, in becoming ludicrous through their empty assumption, or pitiable from their miserable failure either to please, to instruct, or to move?

The young preacher who attempts to speak without preparation is certainly wanting in his duty to God. The

ambassador who should not worthily represent his prince, who should not use his utmost efforts to bring those negociations with which he has been charged to a successful conclusion, would justly be looked upon as a traitor and prevaricator. When the preacher ascends the pulpit he represents the Divine Majesty, he is the ambassador charged with the great and all-important interests of the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls; and is it likely that the young preacher, weak from his very inexperience, who presumes to treat of these momentous matters without all due and diligent preparation, will not dishonour his embassy by his negligence and his rashness, will not expose those divine and eternal interests with which he is charged, to serious, and, perhaps irreparable, injury? Does he tempt God by expecting a miracle to supply for his wilful negligence; that is to say, by expecting to instruct and to move his flock by means of a discourse which contains neither instruction, nor anything calculated to move the sinner's heart, which is wanting at once in clearness and order, in solidity and unction? It is true that the ultimate fruit and success of our preaching depend upon Him who giveth the increase, but it is equally true that the ordinary Providence of God only thus crowns the efforts of those who spare no pains, who omit no labour, to prepare their discourses, to render them solidly instructive, calculated by their unction and warmth to produce salutary impressions upon the souls of the hearers. Not only does such a preacher fail in his duty towards God, but also towards his audience. The most humble, equally with the rich and the learned, have a right to be respected. They are equally possessed of immortal souls which have been redeemed by the priceless blood of Jesus Christ, which are equally destined to reign for eternity in heaven. They have, therefore, an equal right to be treated with respect, and if the discourse which is to be addressed especially to the humble is, of its nature, more simple, it does not therefore follow

that the preacher is exempted from bestowing upon it that preparation which, *mutatis mutandis*, it demands from him.

We may, or we may not, be prepared to adopt the opinion of the theologian, Navarre, who holds that the preacher who habitually neglects to prepare his sermons is guilty of a grave temptation of God; but, in any case, it seems certain that such a person incurs a very serious responsibility. *Maledictus qui facit opus Dei negligenter** says Holy Writ, and it is difficult to conceive any work which is more truly the *opus Dei* than the preaching of His Holy Gospel. What sensible man, in order to save himself a little labour, which, if he be a man of study and ecclesiastical habits, should be truly a labour of love, will run the risk of charging his conscience with the eternal loss of those souls who might, perchance, have been saved had he laboured as he ought to have done to prepare himself to instruct them better in their duty, and to move their hearts more efficaciously to God! If such a negligence, according to Quintilian, be utterly unpardonable in a mere secular advocate, *In susceptâ causâ, perfidi ac proditoris est, pejus agere quam possit*,† what is to be said of the Christian priest, who, if he fail in his duty, compromises not merely the fortunes or the honour of worldlings, but those interests which are infinitely higher, holier, and more sublime, the glory of God, and the salvation of those souls for whom Christ died. If it be true that each one is to be rewarded according to his labour, *Unusquisque propriam mercedem accipiet secundum suum laborem*,‡ what reward is he to receive from his master's hand who has no labour to show; no souls who have been instructed by him unto justice to lead to that master's feet; he, whose words have been, in very truth, but as the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal.

Nor let any one seek to make excuses for his negligence, by pretending that he thus preaches more apostolically. Let

* Jer. xlviii. 10. † Lib. xii. 9. ‡ I. Cor. iii. 8.

him remember that, if certain holy men have produced very great fruit by the most simple and unpremeditated discourses, they were possessed of virtues and sanctity to which he can lay no claim. If they ever spoke without preparation, it was simply because, on account of their vast occupations and apostolic labours, preparation was morally impossible; and God, seeing their good will and their valid excuse, blessed their good intention and crowned their work with a benediction which amply supplied for all its short-comings in the way of positive preparation. Let him remember that the great Saints, who are the preacher's best models, never desisted from careful and studious preparation of their discourses. St. Augustine, that master of sacred eloquence, even after having preached every Sunday for thirty years, continued to prepare his instructions with the greatest care, as he himself tells us at the end of his fourth sermon on the 103rd Psalm. *Magno labore quæsita et inventa sunt: magno labore nuntiata et disputata sunt: sit labor noster fructuosus vobis, et benedicet anima nostra Dominum.* St. Chrysostom never invited any one to his table, in order that he might have more time to prepare his instructions, applying to himself the words of the apostle, *Non est æquum nos derelinquere verbum Dei et ministrare mensis ;** and St. Charles Borromeo never considered himself excused from this preparation, even in his busiest moments, and notwithstanding the facility which he had acquired from long study and frequent practice. In fine, St. Liguorio, spite of the simplicity both of style and expression which he requires in the preacher, never allowed the members of his congregation to ascend the pulpit unless they had first written what they intended to say, until such time as their talent had been so developed by study and practice as to render this minute preparation unnecessary. But, even then, he required them to meditate their matter profoundly, and to make a well-defined and sub-

* Act. vi. 2.

stantial plan of their discourse. And, if this be the teaching and the practice of those who ought to be at once his guides and his models, have we gone beyond due limits in thus pointing out to the young preacher the obligation under which he lies of devoting careful, solid, and studious preparation to his discourses? Do we say too much when we affirm that, in ordinary circumstances, there are few clergymen who, if they begin *early in the week*, and husband their leisure discreetly, will not be able to find ample time to prepare their matter and the best manner of delivering it, without in the least degree trenching upon that relaxation which is becoming, useful, and necessary for them? Do we go beyond our province in again earnestly reminding the ecclesiastical student, or the young preacher, of the sublime and all-important interests which are at stake, the advancement of God's greater glory, and the salvation of immortal souls? It is certain that there are many of his flock who will never acquire that knowledge which is absolutely necessary to salvation unless they acquire it from his teaching; many who will never be reconciled to their offended Maker, unless the terrors of God's judgments are driven into their souls by his preaching. Is it too much to remind him that his reward is to be according to his labour, to remind him that he who instructs even one soul unto justice shall shine for all eternity like a star in the kingdom of his Father? Is it too much to encourage him to take upon himself, cheerfully and willingly, that labour which the due discharge of this most holy and most important work will require at his hands, by the remembrance that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to come?

SECTION II.

SIX PRINCIPAL METHODS OF PREPARING A DISCOURSE.

THERE are six principal methods of preparing an instruction, or, sermon. The first is, to write the whole of it and commit it to memory, word for word. The second is the same as the first, with this difference that we do not bind ourselves to commit it to memory in the same precise manner. The third method consists, in briefly writing, what may be called, the substance of the discourse; *indicating* the principal ideas which it is to contain, their order and the transition from one to another, the affections proper to be excited in each particular part, the principal oratorical movements, and the most striking figures to be employed; without, however, *developing* any of these ideas, affections, or figures, in writing. The fourth is confined to merely tracing, in the slightest manner, the skeleton of the discourse, its divisions and leading arguments. The fifth is more meagre still, as it supposes nothing but a few moments' reflection before entering the pulpit, whilst the sixth consists in committing to memory and delivering the sermons of another. We shall now offer a few remarks on each of these methods. We do not, of course, pretend to lay down absolute laws which are to bind all persons, in all circumstances whatsoever. We merely indicate those general principles which the great masters of sacred oratory, as well as experience, point out as the fittest and safest to be followed in ordinary circumstances and by ordinary persons; leaving, as we must necessarily do, their application to peculiar cases to the prudence and experience of those who are actively engaged in the work of the ministry, with an intimate conviction that he who undertakes the preaching of the Gospel with that purity and simplicity of intention which alone animate the true servant of God,

will never commit any substantial or long-continued mistake, either in regard to his style of preaching, or the nature of the preparation which it demands from him.

1. We venture to say, in the first place, that he who has talent to conceive, and time to compose, his own sermons, ought not allow himself, at least at all frequently, to preach the sermons of another. Such a mode of action proceeds either from sloth, since we do not wish to undergo the labour and pain of composing our own discourse, or from vanity, which prompts us to acquire the reputation of great preachers by delivering the sermons of celebrated men. We cannot expect that either of these motives will draw down upon us the blessing of God. But, let us suppose for a moment, that we are animated by purer motives than these. It will still be certain that the sermons of another can never be of much use to us. It is almost impossible that they can, under the circumstances, be adapted to the capacity and peculiar needs of our congregation. It is still less likely that they will be adapted to our peculiar style and turn of thought, or that we can deliver them with natural feeling, ease, and grace. We have dwelt sufficiently on this point when treating of the practice of composition and the imitation of good models. A simple exhortation, composed according to our capacity, and delivered with unction and zeal, will, from the very fact that it is our own, be vastly more serviceable than the grandest composition of another. Besides, it is very difficult to suppose that, some time or other, the plagiarism will not be discovered, and ourselves naturally held up to the public gaze as men who were either too ignorant, or too careless, to discharge the essential duties of their state; jackdaws, to use the familiar fable, who sought to clothe themselves in the peacock's feathers. It is much better and much more manly to attempt to compose our own discourses as well as we are able. They will, at least, be natural, and, in as far as they are natural, they will be suc-

cessful. Add to all this, that, if we give ourselves the habit of delivering the sermons of another, we shall gradually lose the power, together with the practice, of composition; we shall become unable to rely upon ourselves and upon the resources of our own minds for our conceptions and ideas, the greatest evil which can fall upon any professional man, but, above all, upon the pastor of souls.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that, when we have absolutely neither the time nor the power to compose, it is allowable to preach the discourses of another, provided that it be done simply from a motive of zeal, and with a view to the spiritual good of our flock, since it is evident that it is better that they should be thus instructed than left without any instruction whatsoever. This is as well in conformity with the advice of St. Augustine, as it was the practice of many bishops in the early ages of the Church, who caused those priests, who were themselves unable to preach, to read the instructions which were sent to them, in order that the people might not be left without that teaching which was necessary for them. This was the origin of the instructions which are found in the Ritual. However, although it may be allowable in these circumstances to preach the sermons of another, the pastor must employ many wise precautions to ward off, as much as possible, the inevitable inconveniences of this system. He must not select disconnected fragments, still less those well-known and brilliant passages which would be recognized at once. Neither must he make choice of any matter on which he can lay his hand, collected hither and thither, without unity and without taste. If he do, he will be in the predicament which befel a certain preacher of our acquaintance, who came to us one day in great perplexity to consult us on the subject of a sermon. "I have taken great pains," said he, "to write out twelve or thirteen pages from various French sermon books, and, now, after all my trouble, *I can't make them fit.*" But he, who, for a just cause, makes

use of the sermon of another, must in the first place be careful to select such a one as will be best adapted to his flock, and equally careful to expunge from it whatever may not be suitable to them. He must bear in mind that the greater part of the sermons which are published, more especially those in the French language, having been composed for the court, or for great cities, are written in a style which is above the comprehension of simple and unlettered persons, and treat of vices to which in all probability they are not subject. The golden rule in these circumstances is, to select the most simple discourses which he can find. Not only must he be careful to choose such an instruction as, *omnibus pensatis*, will be most useful to his flock, but the pastor must be equally careful to select such a one as will be best adapted to his own peculiar temperament, character, and style. He will endeavour to become penetrated with those sentiments and affections which it may contain, in order to render them his own as much as possible when he delivers them. As we have already said, he labours under no ordinary difficulty in this matter, since the composition of another can hardly ever become perfectly natural in the mouth of him who thus makes use of it, or perfectly express his turn of thought and his manner of conceiving a subject; whilst, at the same time, these qualities seem to be essential to success. Hence, in conclusion, although we have lain down the circumstances in which it may sometimes be allowable to preach the sermons of another, and the principal precautions which are to be observed in doing so; we earnestly recommend the young preacher never to resort to this expedient so long as he is able to deliver a discourse of his own, no matter how simple its style, or how elementary its character, provided it possess those fundamental qualities which can never be dispensed with, solid instruction earnestly delivered. If it be the fruit of his own honest labour God will surely bless the work of his hands, and render his simple discourse a thousand times

more successful and more fruitful than those polished sentences and those rounded periods which may, indeed, issue from his lips, but which can scarcely ever, if ever, be uttered with that eloquence which can alone move, the eloquence of the heart; that eloquence which must almost always be wanting when a man merely repeats the language and sentiments of another.

2. We venture, in the next place, to say that there are very few occasions on which a clergyman ought to satisfy himself with merely tracing out a meagre skeleton of his discourse, simply indicating its divisions and the heads of its leading arguments. Our opinion is founded on the conviction that the preacher, certainly the young one, who makes no other preparation than this, is exposing himself to the imminent risk of preaching the divine word in such a manner as will neither be worthy of his ministry, nor useful to souls. There are very few preachers who can reasonably promise themselves that, with such a preparation as this, they will be able to address their people solidly or clearly, or impart to their discourse that order, interest, and force, which are due alike to the dignity of the Word of God and the salvation of souls. They are much more likely to be overwhelmed with that sterility of mind, dryness of heart, and utter absence of everything like vigour or force, which will render their sermon useless, perhaps even worse than useless.

3. Even supposing a clergyman to be *bonâ fide* unable to write his discourse, or exempt, by his talents or experience, from doing so, we do not think it sufficient simply to meditate on his subject for a few moments before entering the pulpit. He should, moreover, carefully determine the matter of his discourse, the plan and whole order of its arrangement.

This is merely a development of the idea laid down in the preceding section—viz., that it is almost impossible to speak

with such a preparation, or, more strictly, with such an absence of it, as was there indicated, without failing in the respect due to God and our ministry, without falling into inextricable disorder and confusion. If we are not able to write our discourse, the very least we can do is, to spare no effort that is possible under the circumstances, to secure order and methodical arrangement, to give expression to some ideas that may be solid, and some sentiments that may be becoming, to bring some appropriate passages of Scripture to bear upon our subject, and to confine ourselves within such limits as may be fitting, since diffuseness is one of the most common and trying failings of those who speak without careful preparation. It is true that Fenelon, in one of his dialogues on the eloquence of the pulpit, seems to write in commendation of those who preach without having written their discourse; but, as we shall show in the next section, we equally agree with him in the sense in which he speaks, and under the restrictions which he employs. As he himself says, he speaks of "a man who is well instructed and who has a great facility of expressing himself; a man who has meditated deeply, in all their bearings, the principles of the subject which he is to treat; who has conceived that subject in his intellect and arranged his arguments in the clearest manner; who has prepared a certain number of striking figures and of touching sentiments which may render it sensible and bring it home to his hearers; who knows perfectly all that he ought to say, and the precise place in which to say it, so that nothing remains, at the moment of delivery, but to find words with which to express himself." As we shall presently show, this is, for certain persons, and with certain restrictions, a most excellent manner of preparing an instruction; but it differs very widely from that which consists in merely meditating on our matter for a few moments before entering the pulpit. Hence,

4. We admit that after a person has written his sermons for some years, and thus acquired a profound and at the same time expedite knowledge of the mysteries of our Holy Faith, together with an ease and facility of speaking in public, it is not only allowable, but it may be even more advisable, to be content with that summary preparation which consists in writing, what may be called, the substance of the discourse; *indicating* the leading ideas which it is to contain, their order and the transition from one to another; the affections proper to be excited in each particular part; the principal oratorical movements and the most striking figures to be employed; without, however, *developing* these ideas, affections, or figures, in writing.

We will briefly state the reason on which we rely for this assertion. We take it for granted that the extemporary sermon, in the true sense of the word (and in another part of this work we shall show that the true meaning of an extemporary sermon is not, as is generally understood, a discourse delivered without preparation, but a discourse carefully prepared as to its substance, although not written out in all its parts), will be as a general rule, and with the necessary qualifications, *positis ponendis*, more successful than one which is written and delivered from memory. The written sermon delivered from memory, must always be to a certain extent stiff and formal. The extemporary sermon, on the other hand, is delivered with an earnestness which proves that we speak the language of conviction, and with a warmth which goes at once to the hearts of our hearers. The preacher who delivers from memory a sermon which he has written, always has, with some rare exceptions, the appearance of a schoolboy repeating a task, more or less perfectly, since it is very uncommon, indeed, to find any one who thoroughly overcomes this almost inevitable inconvenience of such a system. The extemporary discourse is delivered in such a natural manner as gains the confidence of our hearers,

diverts their attention from the mere form of our matter and turns it full upon its substance, thus disposing them to profit more deeply and efficaciously by our instruction. The preacher being released from the necessity of keeping a constant and strained watch upon the mere words of his discourse, lest he forget them and with them lose the whole thread of his argument, is at once more free and more vigorous in his action. He is able to give reins to his zeal and yet keep it within due limits. His words, springing immediately and on the spur of the moment from his heart, are living and full of energy. The warmth with which he is animated imparts to his figures and his sentiments an earnestness, reality, and depth, which they would have acquired from no amount of mere technical study. He is at liberty to proportion his discourse to the effect which he wishes to produce; he is able to follow and keep pace with that impression; to insist upon, and develope still more forcibly, those points which he perceives to have struck home: to present in other shapes, and under more sensible forms, those which he perceives to have fallen short of their aim. These constitute some of the principal advantages which the extemporary possesses over the sermon written and delivered from memory; for, of course, we make no mention of that which is merely *read* from a book. In no sense of the word can such a performance be called a *sermon*, neither will the taste of the present day, whatever may have been the custom of former times, tolerate it. It is tedious in the extreme, and it must be practically useless, since it is next to impossible that it can be adapted to either preacher or congregation.

Whilst, however, the extemporary sermon, as we understand it, has its decided advantages, it is also exposed to some inconveniences of a very serious character. These are principally a want of correctness, either in doctrine or composition, and a want of order. These inconveniences are

met by the qualities of age, of talents, and of experience, which we require in those who may justly essay to speak with merely that summary or substantial preparation which we have attempted to describe under this heading. But, as these qualities, so essential and indispensable, not merely to success but to absolute correctness of doctrinal teaching, can scarcely be expected to be found in the ecclesiastical student, or young preacher, we venture to advance another proposition, viz.:—

5. That it is necessary to write our sermons, at least the greater number of them, and commit them to memory in the way to be hereafter explained, until such time as we shall have treated the principal Mysteries of the Faith, shall have acquired an expedite, clear, and solid knowledge of Christian doctrine; together with a great facility of delivering it to others in an easy, pleasing, and, above all, earnest manner.

This proposition requires very little explanation at our hands, since all that has been advanced in this chapter has tended, either directly or indirectly, to the development or establishment of it. We have enforced to the best of our ability the absolute necessity of preparation, and, in developing the various methods of preparing, we have substantially proved that this is the only one on which we can rely, or which is really worthy the name, so far at least as the young preacher is concerned. In conclusion, we will merely glance once more at the immense disadvantages to which the young preacher who follows any other method exposes himself. Let him be quite certain, there are very few young clergymen whose talent is sufficiently cultivated, or who possess such experience, as fits them to preach the word of God in a becoming and effective manner, without first writing their sermon. As a general rule, those who attempt to do so speak without exactness, precision, order, or plan; of course, they may succeed in *talking*, but we speak of the preaching of God's word, as God expects it to be done. If they have any

plan whatever in their discourse they frequently lose sight of it by tedious, and worse than useless, digressions. At one time they weary their hearers by their vain prolixity, at another put them to pain and confusion by their laboured efforts to find expression; and thus the discourse, having neither solidity of matter nor grace of delivery to recommend it, brings neither glory to God nor advantage to souls. Even supposing the young preacher to possess *in radice* the faculty of speaking well, let him be convinced that he must be content to develope it in the commencement by writing. No matter how brilliant his talent, or keen his intellect, he will not be able to cultivate the one or the other in the most profitable manner, except by a good deal of laborious committing of his conceptions to paper, and a still more laborious working of them out. This may, of course, impose some restraint upon his imagination, and impart some momentary stiffness to his style and delivery. But, these are merely transitory blemishes. They will melt away before the warmth of his growing genius, and of the talents which have been thus carefully nurtured and developed, till, in a short time, not a vestige of them will remain; whilst, on the other hand, if, to save himself trouble, or through natural disinclination, he shirk this necessary labour in the beginning, no amount of polish or mere facility will ever supply the want of that order, solidity, and clearness, which must be acquired in youth, if ever, and which is only acquired in the manner we have described. Hence it is that we impress so strenuously upon ecclesiastical students to turn the years of their college course to the very best account, since this is their golden opportunity as regards the study of sacred eloquence. Hence it is that we impress upon them again and again to bear in mind during their season of probation, and during the first years of their priesthood, the wise advice of Cicero, *Caput est, quamplurimum scribere.*

And now let us glance for a moment at the great advantages of this system of careful and accurate preparation. In the first place, it enables the preacher to lay up a fund of most useful and essential matter which he will find it most difficult, if not impossible, to acquire later on in life; since he who does not write in the commencement, and until he has treated the greater portion of the mysteries and doctrine of our holy Faith, loses the principal fruit of his studies and his labours, and each time that he begins to prepare a sermon, he has to commence anew from the very foundation, a labour which as he advances in life he is very unlikely to undertake, but which is none the less essential on that account. In the second place, by thus preparing himself the young preacher perfects, nourishes, and developes the talent for preaching which Almighty God may have bestowed upon him, in a higher or lower degree according to His good pleasure, but with the intention and sole purpose that the talent, whatever it be, which He has entrusted to His servant be turned to the very best account. In obliging himself to write, the young preacher, as we have already shown, obliges himself to express his ideas in the most correct manner. He sharpens the powers of his intellect in thus compelling himself to arrange his thoughts in orderly and logical coherence, and in rendering his reasoning closer, and more precise; whilst he cultivates and developes his taste by attending to the perfect harmony and beauty of the general march of his discourse, to the purity of its style, to the justness of its conception, and to the elegance of its expression. The more he studies his subject, as a natural consequence, the more perfectly he treats it; and thus, after a little labour, painful perhaps in the beginning, and a little diligent care never to speak without such preparation as becomes the Master whom he serves and the holy work entrusted to his hand, he will by degrees, quickly and almost insensibly, acquire the *habit* of speaking well, of preaching the word of God in dignity and

in power without effort and without labour, except such as that which a right-minded and conscientious man will ever bestow upon any work which he undertakes, or, is bound to discharge, for God. Let him neglect to take this necessary trouble, to undergo this essential labour, in the commencement of his ecclesiastical career, and he will never repair the injury which he will thus inflict upon the accidental glory of God, upon the eternal interests of his own immortal soul, and the souls of those for whom he must answer before the judgment seat of Christ. When disinclination or any human or unbecoming motive may tempt him to omit this labour, to shirk this perhaps painful preparation, let him think of the dreadful day to come when he shall not dare to look upon his Master's face unless he can say with the Apostle of the Nations, *Mundus sum a sanguine omnium; non enim subterfugi quominus annuntiarem omne consilium Dei vobis.**

To sum up, then, in a few words. Whilst we admit that there are some who may not require a more elaborate preparation, in order to preach well, than such a one as we have described under No 4. of this section, we take it for granted that the young preacher will, during the first years of his ministry, write at least a considerable number of his sermons. The Lectures in this work have been drawn up and prepared under this supposition, and primarily with a view to aid the student or young preacher in composing his discourse. At the same time, it is hoped that they will be scarcely less useful to those who, from age, experience, or talent, may be excused from such a formal method of preparation; since these, equally with those, will carefully arrange the plan of their discourse and secure its essential unity, follow the same rules of argumentation, and adopt the same means of persuasion. The only difference will be that the young preacher will, for the reasons assigned, reduce his ideas to *written* words, whilst his elder in the ministry will content himself

* Act. xx. 26.

with a more purely mental development of his conceptions, and will trust, at least substantially, to the inspiration of the moment for the *spoken* words with which to express them.

Such, so far as we have been able to collect and interpret them, are the leading principles laid down by the great masters of Sacred Eloquence on this matter of the necessity, and the various methods, of preparing a discourse. It is neither our province nor our wish to dogmatize on this subject, any more than it would be becoming in us to pretend to lay down general laws which should suffer no exceptions. We necessarily confine ourselves to this brief, and what we believe to be, correct exposition of these general principles; leaving their special application to the prudence, discretion, and, above all, to the earnest zeal, of the pastor of souls.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROPER TIME IN WHICH TO WRITE.

HAVING fixed upon his subject, having studied it deeply and collected a mass of matter bearing upon it, having by a skilful and orderly plan secured unity of view and unity of means, the young preacher now proceeds to a most essential part of his preparation, to one on which his success principally depends; viz., the actual composition of his sermon, the perfect rendering in words of those vigorous ideas which he has already conceived, and of those deep emotions which his subject has already called into being. It is now that he is to impart to his discourse proportion and harmony, grace and strength, dignity and unction. It is now that he is to paint nature, and to animate his figures with a living soul. It is now that, by the charms of his style, he is to clothe his skeleton in robes so rich and pure as may render his sermon truly efficacious to *instruct*, to *please*, and to *move* his audience to the practice of all Christian virtue in its highest degree. To secure this happy result he must follow certain practical rules, ever bearing in mind that his object is, not to form a purely artificial system, but to perfect that which flows from and is founded in nature, and raise it to its highest pitch of excellence.

1. The skilful orator never writes except when his heart is warmed to his work, and he feels full of it. To wish to compose when the intellect, the heart, and the imagination are silent; when we feel ourselves cold, sterile, or without inclination for this kind of work, is simply to lose our time,

to break our head without any result. It is impossible to succeed, or to attain any degree of excellence, unless we write *fervente calamo*, when our heart is full of our subject, when we feel an irresistible impulse, so to speak, to give expression to those ideas which are burning within our breasts, to act upon our fellow-men. This, and this alone, is the time when a man can write with vigour, and give expressions to thoughts which will move the hearts of his hearers to their very depths. It is then that words pour upon him, and the richest colours flow from his pencil. Hence it is that the skilful orator writes down on the instant whatever his intellect, his heart, his imagination, his sensibility, suggests to him as particularly useful, striking, or moving on his subject. He developes these ideas according to the inspiration of the moment, without troubling himself about mere correctness or style. He seizes those happy moments of inspiration when the soul, full even to overflowing with its subject, seems to solicit him to give expression to the ideas and sentiments with which it is penetrated. The heart, all on fire, dictates the composition which he seems rather to receive than to produce, whilst the pen can scarcely keep pace with the rapidity of his thoughts. The greatest orator is the man who best knows how to seize these happy moments and turn them to greatest account. That which is composed in these favourable circumstances, is worth more than hours of laboured writing and of studied diction, because it is the fruit of a heart that is deeply moved; and when the heart of the preacher is thus moved it will speak to the hearts of his hearers with a force, a reality, and a fruit, which all the rules of rhetoric could never teach it. It is most essential, then, when we feel ourselves thus happily moved by our subject, not to allow our intellect to become distracted, or our heart to grow cold; but to turn to the utmost profit the precious moments which, once lost, may never return. To guard against this danger of growing cold,

and of losing our grasp upon our subject, we should write down rapidly everything that presents itself to us, without troubling ourselves about the exactness or the finish of our expressions, without occupying ourselves unduly about the rules of rhetoric, the polish of our style, or the elegance of our words. The great thing is to *seize the thought*, and, whilst the fire of inspiration is burning within our breasts, to nourish it more and more eagerly that we may make it efficacious for procuring the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. If we neglect to grasp the happy thought at the fitting moment it may never recur to us, whilst defects of style and inelegances of expression can readily be repaired at any time, during the revision and correction of our composition. The writer will hardly secure this inspiration, as we have called it, this happy moving of the deepest powers of his soul, without writing for a good while at one sitting. Some young writers seem to think that it is sufficient to devote any odd moments, any spare half-hours, to the composition of their sermons. No mistake could be more fatal to success than this. Even those most versed in composition require to write some time before they warm to their subject, before they are thoroughly inspired by it. We venture to say that the greatest orators who have moved the hearts of men would have laughed at the idea of composing their sermons in spare half hours. How foolish, then, for mere novices to aspire to a success which the very masters in Israel could not have achieved by such means! We venture also to say to the young writer, that it is scarcely worth his while to sit down to his desk, unless he can secure at least an hour or two at one sitting. In odd moments, at spare half hours, he may of course compose a certain number of cold sentences, and string together a certain amount of vapid ideas and empty platitudes. Let him not flatter himself that it is thus that he can conceive those burning thoughts, those convincing reasons, those deep emotions, which, setting his own

heart on fire, will impart some portion of its flame to the hearts of his hearers, and thus secure the highest, the holiest, and the noblest ends of sacred oratory. If he hope to succeed by any such half-and-half preparation, he is but miserably deceiving himself, and laying up a store of future failure, of bitter disappointment, and, worst of all, of utter uselessness in the service of God; so far, at least, as one of the most important means of advancing those sacred interests which his Master has placed in his hands is concerned.

2. It is in prayer and meditation that the preacher seeks to fill himself with his subject, and to acquire that true warmth of feeling and expression which alone become the Christian orator. If, after prayerful consideration of his subject, he find himself cold and insensible, he will defer his composition to some more favoured time. That which will not come at one moment, may come at another, and come in abundant profusion.

3. Written composition ought to be distinguished principally by clearness, purity, and variety. By clearness we understand that quality which renders a composition perfectly lucid in conception and in expression, in argumentation and in the general order and connection of the whole; so that it is presented to the mind, even of the illiterate and simple, in such a manner as to be perfectly intelligible, without obscurity or mistiness. It is pure when it is written according to the approved rules of rhetoric, both as regards composition and style. There is variety when the style is modified in accordance with the subject treated, and the different parts of the discourse. Thus, in the simple explanation of principles the style should be plain and unadorned; flowing and unembarrassed in narration; nervous and close in argument; strong and rapid in the appeal to the passions. Subjects which are full of feeling do not admit of a pompous or laboured style, but one which embraces sentiment and pathos. Subjects which have their inspiration in

the imagination, strictly so called, find their expression in a polished, picturesque, and figurative style. Grand subjects require the grand style; that which has its foundation in the greatness of the preacher's soul, and the elevated tone of his sentiments; that which displays lofty thoughts, deep emotions, and beautiful figures, expressed in corresponding language. Simple subjects rely for their effect solely upon justness of thought, neatness of composition, and absence of any apparent effort to please. This variety must flow from, and find its inspiration in, nature. When we perceive that it is failing, and our composition is becoming monotonous and dull, it is well to lay our pen aside for a little while and betake ourselves to meditation, that we may rekindle the sacred fire of inspiration, and thus impart to every thought that character and warmth which alone can render it loving and efficacious. As we shall treat of the style of pulpit eloquence in a special chapter, it would be useless to enter more fully into this question at present.

CHAPTER VI.

INTRODUCTION OF THE DISCOURSE.

ICERO and most of the older rhetoricians, assign six parts to an oration,—Exordium, Narration, Proposition including Division, Proof, Refutation, and Peroration, or Pathetic Part. Many of the formal sermon writers of the last century follow the same order, which is also that laid down by Blair in his Lectures on Belles Lettres. We shall adopt a division which, although more simple, is for all practical purposes, *mutatis mutandis*, substantially the same, and describe a sermon as composed of three leading parts:—I. Exordium, or Introduction; II. The Body of the Discourse, or Argumentative Part; and, III. The Pathetic Part, or Peroration. We lay these down as the essential parts of a sermon. By a sermon, too, we understand a "set sermon," or formal discourse. We do not pretend to say that a preacher is bound, or that it is even desirable, to deliver "set sermons" on every occasion. Still, there are many occasions when such a discourse is expected by a congregation, and is due to them; and, as those familiar instructions which will be delivered on ordinary Sundays differ from the "set sermon," not in the *substantial order of their arrangement*, but in the greater simplicity of their style and manner of treatment, we lay these down as the essential parts of every discourse, *in genere*, since the familiar instruction, equally with the "set sermon," will comprise an introduction, an instructive and argumentative part, and an effort at persuasion, or, the moving of our audience to the

adoption of good resolutions, which is the special object of the Peroration, or Pathetic Part. With these preliminary remarks we now proceed to the consideration of the parts or members of a discourse.

The Exordium or Introduction comprises three leading points, the Text, the Exordium, strictly so called, or Introduction of the subject, and the Proposition, developed when necessary, by means of the Division.

SECTION I.

TEXT.

The custom of placing a text of Holy Scripture at the head of our discourse comes down to us from the earliest ages of the church. In opening our sermon with a passage from Holy Writ, we, as it were, present our credentials to our flock, and proclaim our right to speak as the ambassadors of Him whose word it is; whilst, at the same time, we secure for ourselves and our discourse an amount of reverent attention which no mere words of our own could possibly gain. It is evident that the text is not to be chosen at hazard, but with care and discretion, and in accordance with the following practical rules.

1. The text ought to contain in substance the subject of the discourse, as well as the division, either in formal terms or in consequences which can easily be deduced. It ought to be, in other words, the foundation on which the whole development is to be raised, the germ of the whole discourse; so that, after hearing it announced, we can understand, in a general manner, what is to be the subject of the preacher's sermon.

2. The text ought to have a natural, not a forced, relation to the subject of the sermon. As far as possible, this relation should be literal, since, if the text be allegorical, it

requires a long, tedious, and often strained, explanation which not merely wearies the audience, but trespasses unpardonably upon the body of the discourse. There are, of course, circumstances in which a literal application of the text is less necessary, and some, where it is not possible, as, for example, in Panegyrics, Funeral Orations, and certain Moral Subjects.

3. The text should be announced, simply and faithfully as it stands in Holy Writ, without paraphrase or application. There is another time and place for this when it is necessary.

SECTION II.

EXORDIUM STRICTLY SO CALLED.

After the simple announcement of his text the preacher passes on at once to his exordium, strictly so called. The exordium, is merely a becoming introduction of the subject; and it has for its object to dispose our audience to receive favourably that which we are about to say, that thus we may gain their good-will, excite their interest, and secure their attention, with, of course, the view of their ultimate conviction and persuasion. From this idea of it we can easily conclude that a good exordium is a matter of great importance. We all know how much depends in the ordinary affairs of life upon first impressions. The success of his sermon often depends upon the first impressions which a preacher makes upon his hearers in his exordium. If these impressions be favourable, his audience will listen to the remaining part of his discourse with pleasure and attention; and, consequently, with profit. If he turn them against him in the very commencement, he will find it most difficult, if not impossible, to recover the ground which he has lost through the bad taste displayed in his exordium, or through his inexperience in not introducing his subject in a more becoming manner. According to Cicero, the object of the exordium is to render our hearers,

benevolos, attentos, et dociles ; and, although it is true, that in many instances our hearers may be already well-disposed, and prepared to listen not only with attention and good feeling but also with docility to him who speaks to them in the sacred name of religion, on the other hand the matter to be introduced to their notice is so serious in itself, and of such vast importance to them, whilst the sacrifice of human interests and of unworthy passions which the Christian preacher necessarily demands from his flock is so painful to flesh and blood, as to require, as an ordinary rule, to be brought under their notice with a certain amount of skilful introduction. The preacher will gain his end by the discreet and judicious application of a few very simple and obvious rules.

1. In the first place the sermon must be opened, and the subject introduced, with *modesty.* There is nothing which so powerfully prejudices an audience against a preacher as any appearance of presumption or self-conceit in him—any air of bravado, which seems to indicate that he is either above, or reckless of, the opinion which his hearers may entertain of him—any air of affected elegance, which displays itself in the arrangement of his surplice, or the careful placing of his handkerchief on the front of the pulpit, as if in readiness to wipe away the tears which are presently to flow. Little weaknesses of this kind, which are simply manifestations of the natural man, are very fatal to a preacher. Our audience expect us to be above such trifling. They come, as a general rule, prepared to look upon us as men of God, and, if at the commencement of our discourse, we destroy the illusion by the absurd display of some little petty vanity, we inflict an irreparable injury upon ourselves and our ministry. One of the most common forms which this "naturalness," so to call it, takes, is the introduction of ourselves into our exordium. It is seldom that a man so far forgets himself, or is so far deluded, as to speak in open praise of himself and his qualifications for his task, but it is

not uncommon to hear a preacher expressing regret that his subject had not fallen into abler hands—hands better fitted to do it justice. Now, this is simply a refinement of self-love, it is simply fishing for praise with a hook baited with false humility. It is, as we remember to have seen it styled by an old writer, *humilitas cum hamo*. Our audience see through the flimsy veil at a glance, and their respect and reverence for us are lowered at once. They know that the man who has a due conception of the greatness of his office, the man who like St. Paul preaches only Jesus Christ and Him crucified, has no time, and less inclination, to preach himself, to endeavour to exalt himself by an affected humility. The only safe and general rule that we can venture to give the young preacher on this point is, never to speak of himself, good or bad, in the pulpit, and, least of all, to do so in his exordium. We do not mean to say, of course, that this rule suffers no exceptions; but the circumstances in which he can introduce any mention of himself into his exordium are so rare, and require to be managed with so much dexterity, whilst they suppose so much real modesty and unaffected simplicity in a preacher, that we cannot venture to point them out. On the other hand, talent and virtue are set off to the greatest advantage by modesty. It imparts a character of simplicity to the preacher which opens the way to persuasion, by exciting the interest and conciliating the good will of his audience. It is a testimony of the consideration in which the preacher holds his hearers; and, they, naturally being pleased to be thus esteemed, listen to him with favour, and are predisposed to be convinced even before he has well begun to speak.

2. The Exordium ought to be *brief*, that is to say, it ought to go promptly and directly to its end, which is a general introduction of the whole subject. Ordinarily it admits of no details, arguments, proofs, or figures, except those of a simple nature. In familiar discourses it is nothing

more than a brief and plain explanation of the text, or gospel of the day, with the consequent deduction of the proposition. This brevity is, of course, relative; since the introduction must have a due proportion to the rest of the discourse. Experienced writers say that the exordium should not be more than one-eighth of the whole sermon.

3. The exordium ought to be *simple.* It admits of no grand figures or laboured oratorical display. As our audience are supposed to be calm and unmoved in the commencement of our sermon, it is only becoming to address them in a manner which is in consonance with their feelings. As the sun does not attain his meridian splendour but by degrees, so the preacher must proceed gradually until, at the close of his discourse, he reaches the most elevated heights of oratory. *Gravitatis plurimum, splendoris et concinnitatis minimum,** is the advice of Cicero in regard to the introduction of a discourse. Any display of art or showy oratory in the exordium is attended with two great inconveniences. It makes our hearers suspect that we seek to please rather than to convert, to satisfy our own vanity rather than save their souls. By amusing and distracting them too much it incapacitates them, to a certain extent, for a due relish of the solid food which is to be placed before them in the body of the discourse. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. The first is, when the preacher or his hearers are already inspired with elevated sentiments and deep emotions, which have been called into existence by some great event on which he is about to address them. Such, for example, would be the funeral oration of some illustrious personage, the panegyric of some great saint, or the recurrence of any of the principal festivals of the year. On such occasions as these our audience are already filled with the great thoughts which arise instinctively within their breasts, and, hence, if the preacher were to commence his discourse in the plain

* De Orat. lib. ii.

language and simple manner which befit the ordinary sermon, he would not be in accordance with the sentiments and dispositions of his hearers. Always supposing that he is able to master it (and if he be not he will not attempt to use it) these occasions admit, and demand the employment of the *Grand Exordium;* that, which, according to Cicero, possesses *Ornamentum et dignitatem.* As the subject which it introduces is great, noble, and impressive, the Grand Exordium is distinguished by elevated thoughts, majestic language, and beautiful figures. We have a very striking example of this sort of exordium in Bossuet's funeral oration for the Queen of England. It is only after a deep and serious consideration of his powers that the preacher, and especially the young one, will venture to employ the Grand Exordium. He will remember that there is but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous. If he aim at the sublime without attaining it, he will hardly escape becoming ridiculous by his failure. He will remember, too, that in adopting the Grand Exordium he imposes on himself, not merely the necessity of sustaining the same lofty train of thought and majesty of language, but the obligation of increasing in dignity and power as he proceeds in his discourse. *Ut semper crescat augeaturque oratio.* Hence, remembering that those very circumstances which will render his success, if he attain it, more glorious, will also render his failure more glaring, the prudent preacher will be very slow in attempting the Grand Exordium.

The second exception is when circumstances demand the employment of the *Abrupt Exordium.* There are occasions when an audience are moved in the very depths of their souls by indignation, grief, or some other violent passion. Were a preacher, under these circumstances, to commence his address in the collected manner and the plain style and language of the Simple Exordium, his hearers would turn from him with disgust and impatience. If he venture to

address them on such an occasion, or if duty oblige him to do so, he must throw himself into their circumstances, inflame himself with their excited feelings, and, like the war-horse rushing to the fray, plunge at once into the midst of his subject. He uses only the language of strong passsion, that language which is the expression of vehement feeling, of a soul that is beyond the control of everything save those deep emotions which move him in such wondrous manner, which display themselves in the fire of his eye, in the strong bold energy of his bearing, in the very roughness of his unchosen words. It is impossible to lay down any rules for this kind of exordium, since it is evident that the man who employs it *bonâ fide*, and not as a mere piece of acting, is beyond the control of any set rules, or of any influence save that of the feelings by which he is swayed. There are few occasions on which the Christian orator is called to employ such an introduction to his discourse; fewer still on which he should venture to do so. Perhaps the most striking, as well as best known, examples of the Abrupt Exordium are furnished by the opening of Cicero's first and fourth oration against Cataline.

The only other exception which we need notice is the *Exordium by Insinuation.* It sometimes happens that a preacher has to encounter dispositions in his audience which are anything but favourable to him; or to attack an inveterate prejudice, to dispel a common error, or enter the lists with a skilful and powerful adversary. In these and similar cases, since his subject is almost certain to be unpopular, the orator cannot venture to introduce it at once and without further preface to his audience. He applies himself in the first place to conciliate their good will and remove their prejudices, to soothe their feelings and calm their anger, to gain possession of their minds and enlist their sympathies, and thus indirectly to prepare the way for the introduction of the obnoxious subject. It is seldom that

a Christian preacher has any necessity to use this exordium. It is fitly employed in a controversial sermon, whenever it is expedient to preach one; and in some other circumstances which so rarely occur that, when they do, the preacher's common sense will be a better guide to him than any formal rules which we could point out.

With these exceptions the introduction of a discourse is essentially *simple* both in composition, style, and delivery.

4. The exordium must have an essential relation to the subject of the discourse. In other words, it must necessarily lead us to it, and must bear the same relation to the body of the discourse as the human head has to the body on which it is placed. Those general introductions which will suit one discourse just as well as another are essentially faulty. Without anticipating any material part of the sermon, the exordium should shadow forth the main features of the whole, so that, after listening to it, we have a general idea of the speaker's object, and the means by which he proposes to attain his end. Hence, it follows, that the introduction is to be taken from the very *viscera* of the subject itself, and on this account Cicero counsels us not to write our introduction until after we have written, or, at least, thoroughly digested the sermon by means of our plan. The reason of this is obvious, for if we write our exordium at the very commencement, and before we have thoroughly digested our materials and arranged our plan, how can it possibly shadow forth the main features of our discourse. In such cases we write, not introductions to suit our sermons, but sermons to suit our introductions. By following Cicero's method we can easily deduce our introduction in a telling manner. It will bear the same relation to our discourse as the flower does to its stem, there will be an essential connection between it and the discourse which it substantially shadows forth, and to which it essentially leads. Cicero adds on this point, "When I have planned and digested all the materials of my

discourse, it is my custom to think, in the last place, of the introduction with which I am to begin. For, if at any time I have endeavoured to invent an introduction first, nothing has ever occurred to me for that purpose, but what was trifling, nugatory, and vulgar." These remarks do not necessarily suppose that the whole of our sermon has been written before we compose the exordium, but they suppose that it has, at least, been thoroughly digested and arranged in such a manner as to enable the speaker to shadow forth its leading details in his exordium.

It is scarcely necessary to add that correctness is an essential quality of a good introduction. We have already spoken of the force of first impressions. At the commencement of a sermon his hearers, being as yet unoccupied with his subject or his arguments, direct all their attention to the style and manner of the speaker; and, consequently, he must endeavour to make a favourable impression upon them. After any want of modesty, nothing turns an audience against a speaker so easily as slovenliness of style or composition, and carelessness of manner. When they have once become thoroughly warmed by the subject, they may overlook many defects in the course of a sermon which, if they occurred at the commencement, would inevitably prejudice them against the speaker, and destroy all his chances of success. The introduction is, above all others, that part of a discourse in which our hearers, being as yet unmoved and cold, are disposed to act the critic.

To sum up in a few words. With the exception of the exordium *ex abrupto* which is subject to no fixed rules, we shall introduce our discourse in some such manner as this. Having quoted our text, we proceed to give some explanation of it. In ordinary discourses, such as those which are preached on common Sundays, a development of the text, or a brief explanation of the Gospel of the day, is the most usual, and at the same time, the most interesting and becom-

ing introduction. We then show its application to the subject of our discourse, or, rather, we deduce the subject from this explanation. Descending from general ideas or principles, to more particular ones, we throw out, or indicate, the germs of our plan. Developing these as occasion may require, but always without anticipating any material part of our discourse, we thus prepare the way for the announcement of the proposition with its division, and this in such order, that our proposition naturally flows and is essentially deduced from our introduction, whilst, at the same time, it embodies in its fruitful simplicity the subject matter of the whole discourse in the manner we have described when treating of "unity."

In order to render these remarks more clear, and to bring the practical bearing of the rules laid down more sensibly home to the student, it may be useful to present him with some exordiums which are considered master-pieces of their kind. We will select two examples for this purpose.

FIRST EXAMPLE.

Our first example, which is sufficiently remarkable in itself, and sufficiently well-known, is an Exordium by Brydayne, a celebrated French preacher of the last century. After acquiring considerable reputation in the provinces he came to Paris in 1751. He made his first appearance in the Church of St. Sulpice, whither his reputation had attracted an immense audience, including ecclesiastics of the highest dignity, and persons of the first rank both in Church and State. Maury, who was an enthusiastic admirer of the new preacher, declares that he opened his first discourse, delivered in presence of the august assembly who crowded round his pulpit, in the following words. We need not remark how much the language necessarily loses by translation:—

Exordium by Brydayne.

"At the sight of an auditory so new to me, methinks, my brethren, I ought only to open my mouth to solicit your favour in behalf of a poor missionary, destitute of all those talents which you require of those who speak to you about your salvation. Nevertheless, I experience, to-day, a feeling very different. And, if I be cast down, suspect me not of being depressed by the wretched uneasiness occasioned by vanity, as if I were accustomed to preach myself. God forbid that a minister of Heaven should ever suppose he needed an excuse with you! for, whoever ye may be, ye are all of you sinners like myself. It is before your God and mine, that I feel myself impelled at this moment to strike my breast.

"Until now, I have proclaimed the righteousness of the Most High in churches covered with thatch. I have preached the rigours of penance to the unfortunate who wanted bread. I have declared to the good inhabitants of the country the most awful truths of my religion. Unhappy man! what have I done? I have made sad the poor, the best friends of my God! I have conveyed terror and grief into those simple and honest souls, whom I ought to have pitied and consoled! It is here only where I behold the great, the rich, the oppressors of suffering humanity, or sinners daring and hardened. Ah! it is here only where the sacred word should be made to resound with all the force of its thunder; and where I should place with me in this pulpit, on the one side, Death which threatens you, and on the other, my great God, who is about to judge you. I hold to-day your sentence in my hand. Tremble then in my presence, ye proud and disdainful men who hear me! The necessity of salvation, the certainty of death, the uncertainty of that hour, so terrifying to you, final impenitence, the last judgment, the number of the elect, hell, and, above all,

Eternity! Eternity! These are the subjects upon which I am come to discourse, and which I ought, doubtless, to have reserved for you alone. Ah! what need have I of your condemnation, which, perhaps, might damn me, without saving you? God is about to rouse you, while his unworthy minister speaks to you!—for I have had a long experience of his mercies. Penetrated with a detestation of your past iniquities, and shedding tears of sorrow and repentance, you will, then, throw yourselves into my arms; and by this remorse, you will prove that I am sufficiently eloquent."

Without disputing for an instant the force and vigour of the language in which it is expressed, and without undertaking to say how far it may claim to be considered an Abrupt Exordium, and, as such, above all technical restraints, it appears to us that, on the one hand, this Introduction of Brydayne's is opposed to all the rules laid down, and to all the conditions required by Rhetoricians, in the composition of an ordinary Exordium; whilst on the other, it is not easy to see what there was in the circumstances to place the preacher beyond the control of these rules and conditions.

In the first place, this Exordium seems to offend against modesty. The preacher speaks a great deal too frequently of himself. *I* am not cast down by miserable vanity—*I* am not accustomed to preach myself—*I* hold your sentence in my hand—Tremble, then, before *me*—and a great deal more to the same effect.

Secondly, it is not easy to see how the language employed by the preacher can be considered strictly true. *Until now*, he says, *I have proclaimed the righteousness of the Most High in churches covered with thatch;* whilst the fact was that he had preached in most of the large cities of the kingdom. *I have declared to the good inhabitants of the country the most awful truths of my religion. Unhappy man! what have I done? I have made sad the poor, the best friends of God!* In other words, up to this time he had only preached

to saints! But was this true; and, if it were, how was it to be reconciled with his own words that he had had a long experience of the mercies of God? Surely, these mercies were not confined to the great! *Here my eyes fall only upon the great, the rich, the oppressors of suffering humanity, upon sinners daring or hardened!* How could a preacher address such terms to *any* Christian audience, much less to one whom he then addressed for the first time, and, of whom, consequently, he could know but little? The terrible epithets, *oppressors of suffering humanity, sinners daring and hardened*, etc., were hurled upon the most distinguished citizens of Paris, as if they alone merited them. They might, perhaps, be deserving enough of them, but it may well be doubted whether they were much more depraved, or much more hardened, than the citizens of Lyons, of Marseilles, and of those other large towns in which the preacher had already given missions: and, if they were not, these assertions of Brydayne's seem to be neither true in fact, nor confined within those temperate limits to which even the most ardent zeal must be subject.

Thirdly, if one of the principal ends of the Exordium be to render our hearers *benevolos, attentos, et dociles*, it is not easy to see how this end would be gained by such an introduction as that which we have given. An unknown, and up to that period comparatively undistinguished preacher, would scarcely render an audience which he then addressed for the first time well-disposed towards him, or docile to his teaching, by addressing them as oppressors of suffering humanity, or hardened or obdurate sinners, more especially if that audience were composed of ecclesiastics of high dignity, and of laymen moving in the first ranks of life. It is not likely that such an audience, assembled on such an occasion, were so utterly depraved as they were represented to be; or, that, without exception, they deserved to be included in those terrible anathemas which were hurled upon

them. But, even supposing them, ecclesiastic and layman, to be thus completely lost to all sense of religion and duty, would you take the most effectual means of winning them back by addressing them in such terms as those which Brydayne is represented to have used? Would St. Francis of Sales, or St. Vincent of Paul, have addressed them in these terms? We venture to think not; and, therefore, whilst we freely admit the beauty and the vigorous strength of the language in which it is couched, we are far from presenting this exordium to the student as a model which he may wisely imitate. In fact, so improbable and contrary to good taste does this Exordium seem to some, that M. Hamon, whose judgment we willingly follow in all matters relating to Sacred Eloquence, inclines to the opinion that P. Brydayne never delivered it at all, and that it is merely the fruit of the imagination of Maury. Judging this composition on its own intrinsic merits and fitness, such an opinion would appear most reasonable. On the other hand, however, Maury declares that he heard it delivered, and it is generally received as the production of him to whom it is attributed; neither are those wanting who, looking at it probably more as a piece of composition than as an Exordium, bestow the highest commendations on it.

SECOND EXAMPLE.

Our second example is the Exordium of the Funeral Oration which Bossuet pronounced on Henrietta Anna of England, Duchess of Orleans. We make no apology for presenting this magnificent specimen of Sacred Eloquence to the clerical reader in its entirety. Nothing could be more chaste and beautiful than the language in which it is expressed, nothing more skilful than the manner in which, without anticipating any material part of the discourse, this Exordium shadows forth its main features, and embodies them in the Proposition; *that all is vain in man if we consider*

what he gives to the world; that all is important if we consider what he owes to God; the nothingness and the greatness of man.

Exordium by Bossuet.

"I was then, still destined to render this funeral duty to the most high and most puissant princess, Henrietta Anne of England, Duchess of Orleans. She, whom I had seen so attentive, while I rendered the same duty to the queen, her mother, was to be, so soon after, the subject of a similar discourse, and my sad voice was reserved for this deplorable ministry. O vanity! O nothingness! O mortals! ignorant of their destinies! Would she have believed it six months since? And you, sirs, would you have thought, while she shed so many tears in this place, that she was so soon to re-assemble you there, to weep over herself? Princess, worthy object of the admiration of two great kingdoms, was it not enough that England mourned your absence, without being yet reduced to mourn your death? And France, who saw you again with so much joy, environed with a new renown, had she now no other pomps, no other triumphs for you, on your return from that famous voyage, whence you had brought back so much glory, and hopes so fair? 'Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.' It is the only word which remains to me; it is the only reflection, which, in so strange an occurrence, a grief so just and so sensible permits me to use. Neither have I searched the sacred volumes, to find in them a text which I could apply to this princess. I have taken without study and without choice, the first words which Ecclesiastes presents to me, in which, although vanity has been so often named, it still appears to me not sufficiently so for the design which I propose to myself. I wish, in a single misfortune, to deplore all the calamities of the human race; and in a single death, to show the death and the nothingness of all human grandeurs. This text which suits all the conditions and all the events of our life, by a particular reason becomes

suitable to my unhappy subject; for never have the vanities of the earth been so clearly exposed, nor so loftily confounded. No; after what we have just seen, health is but a name, life is but a dream, glory is but a phantom, accomplishments and pleasures but dangerous amusements: all is vain in us, except the sincere avowal which we make of our vanities before God, and the settled judgment which makes us despise all that we are.

"But, do I speak the truth? Man, whom God has made to his image, is he only a shade? That, which Jesus Christ has come from heaven to seek on earth; that, which He has thought it no degradation to purchase with all His blood, is it merely a nothing? Let us recognize our error. Doubtless, this sad spectacle of human vanities imposed upon us, and the public hope, suddenly frustrated by the death of this princess, impelled us too far. Man must not be permitted altogether to despise himself; lest, believing, with the impious, that life is but a game in which hazard reigns, he follow, without rule and without guidance, the will of his blind desires. It is therefore Ecclesiastes, after having commenced his divine work by the words which I have recited, after having filled all its pages with the contempt of human things, wishes at last to show to man something more solid, and concludes his whole discourse by saying, 'Fear God and keep His commandments; for that is the whole man; and know that the Lord will bring into judgment all things that are done, whether good or evil.' Thus all is vain in man, if we regard what he gives to the world; but, on the contrary, all is important, if we consider what he owes to God. Once more, all is vain in man, if we regard the course of his mortal life; but all is precious, all is important, if we contemplate the term at which it ends, and the account which he must render of it. Let us meditate, then, to-day, in sight of this altar and of this tomb, the first and the last words of Ecclesiastes; the one which shows the

nothingness of man; the other which establishes his greatness. Let this tomb convince us of our nothingness, provided that this altar, on which a victim of so great a price is daily offered for us, at the same time, instructs us in our dignity."

SECTION III.

PROPOSITION, ITS NATURE AND OBJECT—DIVISION, ITS ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES, AND PRINCIPAL RULES.

Having announced our text and duly explained it, we, as we have already remarked, deduce from this exordium or explanation, the great leading truth which is to form the subject of our discourse, and this truth we embody and announce in the Proposition, which forms the third point to be considered under the general head of an Introduction. The Proposition, which is not to be confounded with the end of the discourse, is nothing more than a brief exposition of the whole subject to be treated. We have already glanced at some of its qualities when treating of "Unity." It flows naturally, and as a necessary consequence, from what has preceded it; is expressed in a few words; and must be plain, clear, and precise, stating the subject, the whole subject, and nothing but the subject. It may be announced simply and in a few words, as, for example, Death is certain: Mortal Sin is the greatest evil in the world; or, as is more commonly the case, it may be developed and distributed into its component parts; for, as we have said, although the truth to be proved is essentially *one*, it may be established in *various* ways, and from various points of view. When this is the case we have Division, which may be described as a partition or development of the proposition. (For an example of Division, or, developed proposition, see page 67.)

It is scarcely necessary to remark that there is consider-

able controversy amongst rhetoricians concerning the use of Division. As is well remarked by an eminent authority, the dispute is not, whether there should be division in a discourse, but whether that division shonld be formally announced. No discourse can attain its end without order, without a clear and methodical distribution of its subject matter, and this necessarily supposes division. It supposes that the speaker has arranged everything in its proper place, that every argument, example, or development is where it ought to be, and this is nothing but division. Still, it is one thing to say that the speaker must have his matter thus arranged and parceled out, another to assert that he is bound to announce this partition in its naked details to his audience. Hence, the controversy. Whilst many writers are opposed to any formal division in a sermon there are those who fly to the other extreme. The great sermon writers, French and English, of the last century are formal in the highest degree. A good deal, perhaps too much, of their spirit has come down to our own times, and we hear, "We will now consider in the first point . . . in the second point . . . in the third point" . . much oftener than is pleasant to listen to. There are occasions when a Formal Division is altogether out of place, as, for example, when a discourse is short, when it merely consists of one point, when it is principally of an exhortatory character. In this latter case, as the speaker seeks to gain his end by appealing to the feelings of his hearers, a Formal Division would be worse than useless, since it is of its very nature stiff, precise, and, to a certain extent, destructive of eloquence in the real sense of the word. It is equally inappropriate when it is advisable or necessary for the speaker to conceal his purpose from his audience.

With these exceptions, in all sermons which are partly argumentative and partly exhortatory, as is the case with ordinary discourses, *a division*, is extremely useful. We

have said *a* division, because all the advantages of the Formal Division may be secured by adopting the less Formal or concealed method, whilst the intolerable stiffness and apparent pedantry of the method which deals out its first point, its second point, its third point, and perhaps half a dozen more, with such scrupulous exactness and uninviting plainness, are thus avoided. We refer the student to the plan at page 67 in which we think the division is as formal as it ought ever to be, except in the case of a purely dogmatic, or, still more, a controversial sermon. The student will see at a glance that, by putting the division in this form, "whether we consider the sentiments of man at the hour of death, the actions of the saints, or the views of God," we escape the stiffness of the Formal method which would say, "We will now consider in the first point the sentiments of man at the hour of death, we will consider in the second point the actions of the saints, and, thirdly, we will consider the views of God," whilst the Division is just as good, and just as useful for all practical purposes.

A clearly defined division or distribution of matter possesses many advantages. In the first place it is most useful to the preacher himself. It aids his memory, as well as helps him in his composition. There is no genius so elevated as not to stand in need of a restraining hand. Whatever keeps the preacher from wandering away from his subject is to be most highly prized by him, and he is never greater and more successful in his efforts than when he advances with order that is governed by reason and good taste. An orderly distribution of matter is not less useful to an audience. It sheds a wonderful light upon the entire discourse. It separates the leading questions from those incidental ones, the introduction of which often only serves to render a sermon obscure, whilst it is equally useful in giving due prominence to those parent ideas from which all the details must spring. It refreshes the mind by the repose which it affords it, and

thus paves the way for renewed attention. It excites the interest of the hearer by the desire with which it inspires him of seeing how the division will be worked out. In fine, says St. Charles, experience teaches us that an audience conceive a sermon more readily, and retain it more firmly, when it is arranged in an orderly manner. Knowing whither the preacher wishes to lead them, they follow him with more pleasure, and draw greater fruit from his discourse."

The principal objection to the Division is, that it interferes with the force of the appeal to the passions which is, after all, the great point on which the success of the entire discourse turns, inasmuch as this is the *causa efficax* of persuasion. This objection is, in a limited sense valid, but only in a limited sense. Most discourses are of a mixed character, partly argumentative, partly exhortatory; whilst, in all of them, the proper place for the appeal to the passions is in the peroration or conclusion. Now, an orderly arrangement or division of matter in the argumentative part, or body of the discourse, by no means diminishes the effect of the appeal to the passions in the peroration; neither does it prevent the same appeal from being made with much force and power at the conclusion of each leading argument, during the sermon. On the contrary, the division is of positive advantage in preparing the way for this appeal to the passions; since, by imparting order, reason, and sound logical sequence to the discourse, it helps to convince our audience that they are acting like reasonable men in surrendering themselves captive to the preacher's powers of persuasion; that they are not the victims of a momentary and empty enthusiasm, which is as unworthy of him who endeavours to excite it, without duly preparing the minds of his hearers for it, as it is profitless and unheeded by those who abandon themselves to it for the moment that it lasts; but who never think of putting into practice the impulses with which it may inspire them.

It now remains for us to indicate briefly some of the principal qualities of a good division. In the first place it is evident that it ought to be *clear*. Our only object in employing it at all is to impart clearness to our subject, and, of course, we shall scarcely succeed in this object if our division itself be confused and obscure. Our division, without falling into the extreme of absurd formality, ought to be conceived in terms so clear and precise, ought to throw such a light upon the substantial distribution of our matter, that our audience may seize it without difficulty, and retain it without effort. 2. The division ought to be *just*: that is to say, it ought to embrace the whole subject, neither more nor less; one part ought not to trench upon another, and the various parts ought to have a necessary relation to the whole, so as to produce the unity whence springs that perfect proportion which is at once so pleasing and so just. As far as possible, one point ought to be, so to speak, a stepping-stone to the next, which thus will be presented to our audience with all the additional weight and force which it derives from what has gone before; whilst the interest of the whole discourse will be continually increasing: *Ut augeatur semper, et increscat oratio.* We must take care to follow the order of nature, beginning with the simplest points, and gradually leading our audience from the *magis notum* to the *minus notum*, in logical as well as oratorical order and sequence. If the various divisions be not clearly defined and marked out, if one member run into another, so that the preacher is continually obliged to turn back and resume arguments or points of his discourse which he has already treated, he will quickly become involved in inextricable confusion, whilst his audience will turn away from him in disgust at having the same ideas thus thrust upon them again and again until they are weary of them. It is certain that our division will be *just* in proportion as it is *natural*. Hence, it is impossible for a preacher to lay down fixed laws for himself, and say I will

always have three points or four points, as the case may be. We must assiduously study to discover into what divisions our subject most naturally resolves itself and adopt them; with a firm belief that, as they are the most natural, so will they be the most just and the most successful.

3. Our division, though fruitful, must be brief. The terms in which our partitions are expressed should be concise, not containing a single word which is not required for the enunciation of the great truth laid down in our proposition, with the division or partition which may be necessary, and which our experience and good taste will point out to us. Not only must the terms in which they are expressed be clear and concise, but the divisions or points of our discourse must be few. If they be too numerous, four or five for example, it will be impossible to develop them thoroughly within the limits of any ordinary discourse, and nothing is more indiscreet and destructive of the end we have in view, than any undue demand upon the time or attention of our hearers. As an ordinary rule long sermons are certain to be failures. The above remarks may be applied, *a fortiori*, to subdivisions. However much they may have been employed in other times, the spirit of our age, and the practice of our pulpit, are against their use. They may be in their proper place in a logical treatise, but they render a sermon intolerably dry and hard, whilst they impose an unbearable tax upon the memory of an audience. Instead of elevating and adding dignity to it, they weaken a subject immeasurably; instead of throwing light upon it, they surround it with the densest obscurity, and produce those evil results which it is the very purpose of the division to meet. "*In eandem obscuritatem incidunt contra quam partitio inventa est*,"* says Quintilian. Subdivisions, at all events to any extent, take away all the force and majesty of a discourse. To use a homely phrase, they fritter it away to nothing; and, without any

* Lib. iv.

commensurate result, by their long-drawn conclusions and finely-spun distinctions, suck all the life-juice out of those two or three strong and vigorous leading members of his discourse, which, if the preacher had been content to employ them in their native ruggedness and undiminished strength, would have been so powerful and efficacious in his hands.

To say that a division must be brief is almost the same as to say that it must be simple. The more simple it is the more perfect it is, and true genius is shown, not in inventing extraordinary plans and splitting a subject into innumerable divisions and subdivisions, but in working out and developing a simple plan; producing a whole grand in its unity and beautiful in its simplicity, from a design which shall have that same unity and simplicity for its characteristic qualities.

4. The division must be *practical.* The end of all our preaching is to make men better, by inducing them to practise virtue and avoid vice. Salvation is to be attained, not by belief but by practice; and, hence, in every sermon the preacher naturally aims at some practical result to be produced upon the souls of his hearers. The division of a discourse, therefore, ought to embrace that which is to be done, or that which is to be avoided; so that, by merely listening to it, the audience perceive, at least in a general way, the practical fruit which they are to draw from the sermon.

Sometimes we may deduce the division of our matter from Holy Writ, and this, of course, is the highest source to which we can go, because we thus speak with the authority of God Himself, and proceed according to the order which He Himself has marked out. Finally, we may divide our subject either as its very nature, or our own experience or taste, may suggest to us as most pleasing,or useful for our end.

In order to aid the young preacher, we will now give him a few examples of the most simple and common divisions which are made of those ordinary subjects which he will most frequently be called to treat.

EXAMPLES.

The End of Man. (1.) What is the end of man? (2.) Is man bound to attain his end? (3.) By what means is he to attain it?

Sin . . . . . (1.) What is mortal sin? (2.) What are its effects in regard to God, angels, and men? (3.) Its remedies in regard to past and future sin.

The divine Perfections: Omnipotence, Sanctity, Wisdom, Goodness, Mercy, Justice, etc., of God.

(1.) God is everywhere present. (2.) The consequences which flow from this truth.

Or,

(1.) The omnipotence of God is a powerful motive why we should avoid sin. (2.) A powerful means of arriving at perfection in a short time.

Or (BOURDALOUE),

(1.) God has an essential dominion over us which we are bound to acknowledge by a sincere oblation of ourselves.

(2.) A universal dominion which we are bound to acknowledge by an entire oblation of ourselves.

(3.) An eternal dominion which we are bound to acknowledge by a prompt oblation of ourselves.

Or (BOSSUET),

(1.) The glory of God is manifested in the conversion of the sinner. (2.) His mercy in the pardon of the sinner. (3.) His justice in the imposition of penance.

The benefits of God: Providence, Incarnation, Redemption, Grace, Eucharist, Confession, etc.

(1.) The greatness of the benefit viewed in itself, in him who bestows it, and him who receives it. (2.) The obligations which result from its reception.

Or,

(1.) By my creation God is the author of my being, therefore I am bound to obey him. (2.) He has made me for himself, therefore I am bound to tend to him. (3.) He has made me to his own image, therefore I am bound to resemble him.

Death . . . .

(1.) We must prepare for death. (2.) How we are to prepare.

Or,

(1.) The certainty of death ought to detach us from all things of the world. (2.) The uncertainty of death ought to cause us to live in a state of continual preparation.

Judgment. . . .	(1.) Its nature. (2.) The judgment of the just, their consolation. (3.) The judgment of the wicked, their anguish and despair.
Heaven. . . .	(1.) The glory of Heaven. (2.) Means of attaining this glory. Or, (1.) The joys of Paradise ought to detach our hearts from the things of the world; (2.) To inflame us with fervour in the service of God; (3.) To fill us with courage to sustain the trials of life.
Hell.	(1.) What is Hell. (2.) For whom it is prepared. (3.) How we are to escape it.
Virtues and Vices.	(1.) Nature—marks, characteristics. (2.) Motives—necessity, utility, profit, etc. (3.) Means—general or particular.
Sacraments. .	(1.) Nature or excellence. (2.) Necessity. (3.) Dispositions.
Prayer.	(1.) Motives. (2.) Things to be asked. (3.) Conditions.
Almsgiving. . .	(1.) By establishing this precept God has shown his mercy to the poor; (2.) To the rich. Or, (1.) Obligation. (2.) Advantages. (3.) Conditions.
Religion. . . .	(1.) The evil of living without religion; (2.) Of not living according to our religion; (3.) Happiness of living up to our religion.
Scandal. . . .	(1.) Its nature and enormity. (2.) Its punishment. (3.) Its reparation.
The Blessed Virgin.	(1.) Who is the Blessed Virgin Mary: the Daughter of the Father, the Mother of the Son, the Spouse of the Holy Ghost. (2.) Motives why we should worship her: our Queen, our Refuge, our Comforter, our Mother. (3.) How we are to worship her: Invocation and Imitation.

CHAPTER VII.

BODY OF THE DISCOURSE—INSTRUCTION, ARGUMENTATION, REFUTATION, SPECIAL APPLICATION.

SECTION I.

INSTRUCTION—ITS OBLIGATION, NECESSITY, AND NATURE.

HAVING introduced and sufficiently explained our subject, having laid down and developed, in the proposition and division, the great leading truth to be propounded and carried home to the hearts of our hearers, we enter at once upon the establishing of that truth, we proceed to prove our thesis, in what, is technically called, the argumentative part, or body of the discourse. Our proposition, though essentially enunciating *one* truth, enunciates a truth which may be viewed, as we have already remarked, in *various* ways and established by *various* proofs. These proofs, with their varied amplifications and oratorical developments, form the parts or points of our discourse; and having duly introduced our subject, and distributed these parts or points, we, without further preamble or loss of time, enter upon the establishment of them by means of solid and appropriate argumentation. We scarcely need speak of the necessity of solid argument in every discourse, since the remaining parts of the sermon are subordinate to this, and are effective in proportion as they contribute to its success. The exordium simply paves the way for the more becoming introduction of the argumentation, whilst the peroration

merely seeks to move the hearts of our hearers, and thus cause them to put in practice those virtues or good resolutions of whose reasonableness and obligation they have been already convinced by the preacher's arguments. The object, therefore, of the confirmation or argumentative part of a sermon, is the full and complete development of the proposition, with the ultimate end of the persuasion of our hearers; for, in every discourse, we certainly seek to make our audience adopt our views, we certainly aim at obtaining for those views not only the assent of their understanding, but still more the consent of their will and their heart.

Sermons may be addressed, as Canon Bellefroid well remarks, to three classes of persons—to those who, although in ignorance, are quite willing to receive the truth: to those who, though instructed, are in doubt: and, finally, to those who are neither in ignorance nor doubt, but who are restrained by their passions, evil habits, or human respects, from reducing their belief to practice, and following the light which God has given them. If we are preaching to an audience composed of the first class, it is merely necessary to instruct them. It is sufficient to show them their duty, and they will at once embrace it. The second class require to be convinced. It may be that they are beset with prejudices which we must combat; or, perhaps they are in such a frame of mind that they refuse to receive anything upon our bare word. They must have solid reasons for the doctrines we advance; but, once convinced, they lay down their arms without further parley. In their case conviction and persuasion are identical, and they willingly renounce any vice as soon as we convince them that it is contrary to the law of God. The third class are more difficult to be managed. They are neither in ignorance nor in doubt, but they are under the dominion of passions which enthral them, and which render them deaf to all conviction or persuasion, until we can manage to direct their forces against themselves;

until we can manage to avail ourselves of those same passions and turn them in the right direction; until, by means of a warm and fervid eloquence, we can move the hidden springs of their heart, act efficaciously upon their will, and gain them from vice to virtue.

It may, of course, happen that a preacher may have to address an audience composed exclusively of one or other of these three classes. In such a case his sermon must be adapted to the circumstances in which he finds himself; but, as an ordinary rule, a discourse has to be composed in such a manner as to embrace them all at the same time. Not only have our audience different wants, but it also often happens that the same people require to be instructed, to be convinced, and to be efficaciously moved. It is impossible to instruct properly without strengthening our doctrine by solid proofs, reasons, and arguments; impossible to reason powerfully and efficaciously without at least some admixture of those more tender feelings through which we reach the heart.

Hence, whether we look at it in merely an oratorical point of view, or whether we regard it with the eye of faith, it is equally plain that clear, solid, practical instruction, *instruction embracing explanation and argumentation*, forms an integral and important part of every good discourse. Let us look at it for a moment merely in an oratorical point of view. A discourse which is well furnished with sound, solid instruction, which is strong in proofs and appropriate arguments, is certain to be a good discourse. According to Horace the great secret of eloquence is to be well instructed on our subject, and to be perfectly made up on all the collateral knowledge which is necessary for the thorough mastery of it.

Scribendi rectè, SAPERE *est principium et fons.**

The first object of the orator must necessarily be to

* Ars Poet.

instruct his audience thoroughly on the subject which he treats, and this is still more true of the sacred, than of the secular orator, since the very end and aim of his ministry is to lead men to the practice of virtue through a knowledge of the truth. Instruction ought to form the body, the substance of the discourse; the other qualities, the charm of pleasing, and the power of moving, supply the blood, so to speak, which is to animate and give full life and vigour to this body. *Sicuti sanguis in corporibus, sic illæ in orationibus fusæ esse debebunt,** says Cicero. The power of pleasing and of moving, according to Quintilian, has no right to be brought forward except in support of, and to add full weight to, solid instruction. If it be important, as it most certainly is, to please and to move in a sermon, it is infinitely more important to instruct; and we may safely say that no preacher will ever succeed in really pleasing or moving, unless he has first succeeded in imparting sound instruction. The highest flights of oratory, unless they be prepared for by a foundation of clear explanation and solid instruction, will be mere empty declamation, the antics of a madman, as Longinus expresses it, or, as Cicero puts it, the freaks of a drunkard in a company of sober men. Hence we see that the greatest orators of antiquity always paved the way for the highest flights of their genius by a course of solid argumentation; and those powerful appeals to the passions of their audience, by which they carried all before them, had their foundation in the solid arguments which had already been established. It was thus that Demosthenes proceeded in his immortal Philippics, and this is the course followed by Cicero in those models of all that is great in oratory, his orations against Cataline.

Let us look, now, at this subject with the eye of faith. It is said that Bossuet obtained more conversions by his "Exposition of Catholic Doctrine" than by all his contro-

* De Orat. lib. ii.

versial writings or his great sermons. According to the Council of Trent, the Holy Fathers have frequently converted infidels, led back heretics to the truth, and confirmed Catholics in the faith, by a simple exposition of the doctrines of religion. Regarded with the eye of faith, we may safely say that solid instruction is an essential part of every sermon The obligation of imparting it is identical with the obligation to preach. When Jesus Christ laid upon his disciples and their successors the obligation of preaching, *Docete omnes gentes*, he laid upon them the obligation of imparting to their flocks clear, solid instruction, for such is the meaning of the word, *Docete*. The man who preaches without instructing does not satisfy his obligation. He only eludes it. It is in vain to busy ourselves about pleasing our hearers by the charms of our style, or the graces of our diction; vain to appeal to those deep emotions, those master passions which so wonderfully move and influence the heart of man, unless we have first laid a foundation of solid instruction. *Docere necessitatis est. . . Populi prius docendi quam movendi*, says St. Augustine.*

And, in truth, if we wish intimately to appreciate the position which instruction holds in the Christian oration, we have only to reflect for a moment upon the wants of those to whom our ministry is addressed. Instruction, in the broad meaning of the term, may be said to comprise a clear explanation of the Christian doctrine, and the establishment of it by solid and appropriate proofs, or arguments. Now, as a general rule, do not our hearers stand in urgent need of the one and the other? Unless their pastor clearly explain to them the Christian doctrine, their ideas, even on the most essential points, will be confused, inexact, perhaps false; inasmuch as they have no other means of learning their religion except those which he may afford them by his explanation of the truths of their Holy Faith. Does not

* De Doct. Christ, lib. iv. cap. 12.

experience bear sad testimony to the truth of these remarks? How many persons are there who listen, Sunday after Sunday, to what are called sermons, and yet remain in ignorance of leading truths and essential practices; who go on from year to year without ever acquiring a thorough knowledge of their religion? Either their pastor knows not how, or takes not the trouble, to impart to them that clear explanation of their faith and its obligations which would have made them intelligent and fervent Catholics, *potentes in opere et sermone*, able to give a reason for the faith that is in them; or, what is just as likely, he takes for granted that they know a great deal of which in very truth they are profoundly ignorant, and so, instead of giving them that elementary instruction which they grievously need, he lays himself out to preach set sermons, perhaps on far-fetched and unpractical subjects, filled with empty conceits and useless speculations, although expressed, it may be, in pleasing language, and embellished with all the charms of style and diction. From whichsoever cause the mistake may arise, the unfortunate result is the same, and the result is, that in too many congregations we have numbers of what we familiarly call, half-and-half Catholics; Catholics who have such hazy and undefined notions on the most essential points of belief and of practice; who are certain to take the wrong side on those political-religious questions which are continually cropping up, as, for example, the question of the Pope in our day; men who, either having never thoroughly known their religion, or having forgotten what they once knew, are by their evil lives a living scandal to the church to which they nominally belong, a reproach to the body whose name they bear, and, it may be, a heavy burden to be laid upon the soul of the pastor who is responsible to God for their eternal salvation. These poor people, the humble equally with the more respectable, have looked to their pastor to be fed with the bread of life, and he has only given them a stone. They

have come, Sunday after Sunday, hungering and thirsting perhaps for the food of solid instruction, and they have been sent empty away; or, at best, they have been but fed with some empty conceit, some vain speculation, which may have ministered pleasantly for the moment to a diseased appetite, but which has left no permanent or lasting effect behind it. Hence, we have so many sermons and so little fruit, so little real piety and so much pretence of virtue, so many superstitions and so many disorderly habits even in those who make a practice of approaching the Holy Sacraments. Yes, let the preacher persuade himself most intimately, that if his sermons are to be really useful, if they are to be worthy of him and his high mission, they must be full of solid instruction. Let him feed his flock with the solid food of the Christian doctrine, clearly explained and earnestly enforced. Let him never be weary of explaining the elementary truths of our holy faith, the Sacraments, the Creed, the Commandments of God and His Church. Let him insist upon them, in season and out of season. Let him enforce them, *opportune et importune, in omni patientia et doctrina.* Then will his preaching be worthy of himself and his mission. Then, and then alone, will he bring forth much fruit to the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls. Then, and then alone, will he truly discharge "the work of the ministry," *opus ministerii.*

Not only must the Christian doctrine be *clearly explained*, but it must be *solidly proved.* No doubt there are some truths which are so clear, or which are so universally admitted, that it would be useless, perhaps even dangerous, to set about proving them. With the exception of these primary truths, the preacher is expected to support his propositions by solid proofs. Our audience neither regard us as inspired, nor the assertions which we advance as infallible. They frequently listen to us with a certain degree of distrust, and only give their assent to our teaching when it is

sustained by sound argument. Anticipating that we shall probably demand from them sacrifices painful to flesh and blood, very frequently they are prepared beforehand to entrench themselves behind those subterfuges which self-love may suggest to them for withholding their consent to the doctrine advanced by the preacher. If such be the case, if they be thus prepared to resist the truth, let the preacher at least confound them by the force of his arguments; and, if he cannot bring them into subjection to the light, reduce them to silence. Besides, how often is the conviction produced by solid argument the only fruit that remains after a sermon! Emotions are transitory, resolutions inconstant, impressions easily effaced. If these affections be not founded upon deep and earnest conviction, the whole edifice is but as a house built upon the sand, which is swept away by the first wind of temptation, the first whispering of human respect, the first assault of passion, or the first strong attack of natural repugnance and weary disgust.

Hence it is that sound reasoning, solid argumentation, is the very nerve and muscle of a discourse. In eloquence as in philosophy, conviction is the result of sound reason, the fruit of just consequences drawn from good and true principles. The difference is, that the philosopher affects the driest and most rigorous terms; whilst the orator seeks to hide the natural ruggedness of the instrument which he employs under the graces of the garment with which he clothes it, but it is the same instrument as that which is used by the philosopher, and it is used for the same end, to *convince* his hearers; the philosopher, however, looking upon conviction as an end, whilst the orator views it as a means, an essential means if you will, but, still, only as a means to persuasion.

Moreover, man being a creature of reason desires to be led by reason to comprehend and to adopt those truths which are proposed to him. If he be not thus guided, either he

does not adopt them at all, or, his faith being at best but weak, is exposed to continual danger. Resting upon no solid foundation, that faith is continually exposed to be shaken, if not to be altogether overthrown, by the evil discourses to which he is constrained to listen, by the bad books with which he so frequently meets, or by the temptations with which he may be assailed from within or without, from the evil suggestions of his restless enemy or of his own corrupt nature. Hence, whenever the preacher has to establish any truth which has been formally denied or called into question, he must advance those formal and positive arguments which will place it, clearly and incontestably, above doubt or cavil. When there may not be the same rigorous necessity for advancing formal proofs, there are many occasions on which it is most useful to prove the Christian doctrine by solid arguments. If our people have once clearly comprehended the force of those arguments on which their Holy Faith and its salutary practices are built, they will not only be secured in a great measure against the assaults of the enemy, but they will also be able to refute the sneering sophisms of the unbeliever, whilst they will appreciate more intimately, and prize more highly, that religion whose motives and whose precepts are equally in accordance with the conviction which flows from the intellect, and the love which springs from the heart.

Thus much on the general necessity of instruction in the argumentative part or body of our discourse. It now remains to descend more into particulars, and to examine more in detail the precise nature of this instruction, and the manner of imparting it. In order to render his discourse solidly instructive, we need hardly say that the preacher does not commence by consulting his imagination, or by selecting the most pleasing or uncommon figures of speech. He commences rather by acquiring from approved sources a fund of clear, solid, practical information on his subject. Having

studied for his own information, he then studies how to apply his knowledge most powerfully and efficaciously to his hearers; for, it is one thing to possess a certain amount of information on any point, and another, and a very different thing, to know how to impart it to an audience. It frequently happens that the most learned men are the worst teachers, and, this, either because they cannot comprehend the difficulties of persons who are less gifted than themselves, or, because they do not study how to adapt themselves to the comprehension and intellectual calibre of their audience. No matter how well a man may know a thing, he must study it deeply *in relation to his audience* before he will be able to expose it with clearness, and with such method, and in such manner, as may render it intelligible, and by this means useful to them. The instruction which the Christian preacher necessarily proposes to himself to impart to his flock is comprised, as we have already remarked, under two leading heads: (1) a clear explanation, and (2) the establishment, by solid proofs, of that portion of the Christian doctrine which forms the subject of his discourse. We shall best investigate these important matters by considering the manner according to which they are to be conducted; at the same time suggesting to the young preacher some practical rules which may aid him to explain and establish the points of his sermon.

SECTION II.

EXPLANATION OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. CLEARNESS, THE ESSENTIAL QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION—MEANS OF SECURING IT. SPECIAL ADAPTATION OF THE SUBJECT TO THE AUDIENCE.—RULES FOR THE USE OF WORDS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF STRONG AND HARMONIOUS SENTENCES.

In order to explain his subject clearly, effectively, and well, to his hearers, the preacher must follow certain practical rules.

1. Unless he have positive knowledge of the contrary, he must take it for granted, as we have remarked in another place, that his audience know very little, that they possess very little exact and definite information on the subject which he is treating, and his explanation must be always made with these principles in view. Hence, *positis ponendis*, he will explain his subject, its nature, origin, or special bearing, in the most simple and elementary manner, clearing up every difficulty which may reasonably be supposed to exist in the minds of any of his hearers. It is vastly less inconvenient to run the risk of saying too much, and of repeating to the more instructed portions of our flock explanations which they may have heard before, and which they perfectly understand, than to say too little and thus leave the more ignorant portion of our charge without that knowledge which is absolutely necessary for salvation. Besides, as we said above, the most elementary truths can always, by due preparation and care, be presented in an attractive and pleasing manner; whilst, on the other hand, spiritual things, Christian truths and Christian practices, even of the most elementary character, are always more or less obscure to the sight of the children of the world whose eyes are blinded by material interests, passions, and sin. Let not, then, the young preacher be deterred from explaining simple truths, in a simple manner, by the thought that he may weary his audience by repeating what they already know. Experience will soon teach him that they possess much less exact and definite knowledge than he gives them credit for. Let his golden rule ever be *Non nova, sed novè.*

2. In preparing his instructions the preacher ought to impose upon himself a conscientious obligation of being very exact; of distinguishing carefully between what is of precept and what is only of counsel, between essential dispositions and what is only of greater perfection. He ought also to be much more solicitous about practice than speculation

about preparing his hearers to receive the Sacraments worthily rather than about filling them with admiration of them. The reasons for this are evident.

3. The first and most essential quality of good instruction is *clearness*. Clearness is that quality in a discourse, or in a particular sentence, which enables the hearer to understand, easily and unhesitatingly, the meaning of him who speaks. When a discourse is thus clear, an audience can no more help understanding its meaning than they can help perceiving the rays of the mid-day sun. *Tam simplex et apertus sermo debet esse, ut ab intelligentiâ sui nullos, quamvis imperitos, excludat.** Clearness is identical with simplicity and precision. The young preacher, more especially in a country like Ireland, where nature has endowed her children with a warm and fervid imagination, can never impress this truth too deeply upon himself. He must persuade himself that clearness and simplicity go hand-in-hand. In the first years of his ministry more particularly, he must cautiously restrain and control the imagination which is so ready to run riot amid the flowers of rhetoric; and he must not shrink from an unsparing use of the pruning knife when he finds, as he often will, that he is sacrificing sense to sound; that he is losing clearness in verbiage; that he is heaping epithet upon epithet, without in any way developing or rendering his meaning more plain.

It is evident, however, that clearness as applied to instruction is a relative term, since a discourse, whose meaning may be quite plain and intelligible to one audience, may be just the contrary to another, less gifted or less highly educated. The clearness of a discourse, in this relative sense, may be said to depend, (*a*) Upon the tact, discretion, and judgment with which the subject is adapted to the special capacity of the audience to be addressed; (*b.*) Upon such a selection of individual words and phrases as are most proper to express the ideas to be conveyed; (*c.*) Upon such an

* St. Prosper. Lib. i. de vit. contempl., c. xxiii.

arrangement of those words and phrases as will form a well-constructed, strong, and harmonious sentence.

(*a.*) St. Augustine in his work *De catechizandis Rudibus*, and all the masters of the art of Sacred Eloquence, are unanimous in their opinion as to the absolute necessity of adapting our discourse to the intelligence and capacity of our audience. Quintilian, in his Institutions, devotes an entire book to the same subject, nor is Cicero less explicit on the obligation of the orator to adapt not only his thoughts, but his expressions, to the capacity of his hearers. *Non enim*, he says, *auditor omnis eodem aut verborum genere tractandus est, aut sententiarum. . . Nec semper, nec apud omnes, nec contra omnes, nec pro omnibus, eodem modo dicendum.** This is one of the main secrets of the success of a discourse, as the want of this special adaptation is one of the principal causes of the little fruit which is produced by many sermons. A preacher sits down in his room and, without a thought of the peculiar capacities, necessities, and dispositions of those to whom it is to be addressed, composes a vague, general, and unpractical discourse, just as much adapted to one congregation as to another. He seems to take it for granted that all people are gifted with the same capacity, have received the same amount of education, and are subject to the same infirmities and wants. On the same principle, some clergymen take much pains to write a discourse for every Sunday in the year, thinking, that when they have done this, they have fulfilled all that is due from them, and that nothing remains but to repeat the same course of sermons year after year; as if the wants of the faithful never varied, as if they never made any progress in virtue, or, in fine, as if the preacher, after many years spent in the ministry, acquired no additional knowledge and experience, no greater capacity for instructing, guiding, and governing his flock, than he possessed in the first days of his priesthood.

* Orator, lib. lxxi. et cxxiii.

Now, this is very false, and is not only prejudicial to success in preaching, but is opposed to the first principles of Sacred Eloquence. The orator, who does not sedulously adapt his discourse to the capacity and dispositions of his special audience, simply abuses language. Language has been given to man as the vehicle of communicating his ideas to his fellow-men. It is evident that language can only attain its end when it is intelligible, and hence, if he who addresses me does so in terms which I cannot comprehend, he diverts this faculty from the end for which it was destined by God, and stands in the same relation towards me as a stranger whose tongue is unknown to me. *Si nesciero virtutem vocis, qui loquitur, mihi barbarus.** He raises his voice without any reason, says St. Augustine, since we only speak in order that we may be understood. *Loquendi omnino nulla causa, si quod loquimur non intelligunt ii propter quos, ut intelligant, loquimur.*†

Such a speaker fails no less signally as regards the rules of true eloquence. True eloquence does not consist in the mere graces of style, in skilfully rounded periods, or in elegant figures of speech; but in the power of acting upon the minds and the hearts of men; enlightening the one by means of solid instruction and reasonable conviction, and moving the other by those strong emotions which influence the will and reduce it to subjection. It is evident that the first condition for securing these great effects of eloquence consists in putting ourselves, in some sense, on a level with those to whom we speak, and in thus addressing ourselves to their capacity and to their emotions and feelings. There is no doubt that, in this happy facility of addressing himself to his audience, lay the great secret of that wonderful influence which O'Connell exercised for so many years over the Irish people; which enabled him to turn them whither he would; to govern them and to restrain them as if they had

* Cor. xiv. † De Doct. Christ. lib. iv. 10.

been one man. Hence, the truth contained in the wise precept of Quintilian, *Apud populum qui ex pluribus constat indoctis, secundum communes magis intellectus loquendum est.**

These principles, which are essentially true as regards orators in general, become still more practical, and of still higher significance and importance, when applied to the preacher of the Gospel. The sacred orator, who does not do all that lies in him to adapt his discourse to the capacity and special necessities of his hearers, forgets the great examples which are set before him by his Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and the Saints. We have only to take up the Sacred Scriptures, to see how sedulously our Divine Lord varied the matter and the form of his instructions, according to the capacity of those whom he addressed. With the Doctors of the Law he spoke a language elevated and closely reasoned, full of analogies and deductions logically drawn from intricate and difficult passages of the Old Testament. When he addressed the people it was in the most simple and familiar manner. His words are clear, and his language contains many short maxims easy to retain and full of substance.† In order that he may be more easily and fully comprehended, he descends to the most humble comparisons, such as those of the labourer, the husbandman, the vine, and others drawn from subjects which were constantly before the eyes of the people. As St. Mark tells us, he only spoke of those matters which they were able to understand, *Prout poterant audire.*‡ He abstained from those which were above their comprehension; *Adhuc habeo multa dicere vobis, sed non potestis portare modo.*§ Following the example of his divine Master, St. Paul addressed the Corinthians, not as spiritual persons but as those standing in need of the most simple and elementary instruction: *Tanquam parvulis in*

* Lib. iii. c. 8.

† Sermon on the Mount.

‡ Marc. iv. 33.

§ Joann. xvi. 12.

*Christo lac vobis dedi, non escam; nondum enim poteratis.** Such, too, has been the teaching and the practice of all the Saints of God. What can be clearer, or more carefully adapted to the capacity of his hearers, than the Homilies of St. Gregory the Great? How excellently he reduces to practice the precepts which he deduces and lays down from the words of Job, *Super illos stillabat eloquium meum.*† He who instructs others, says this holy Doctor, must accommodate himself to the weakness of his hearers. He must allow his instruction to fall upon them little by little, drop by drop, according as they are able to receive it; abstaining from everything which is too deep to be useful to them. He who acts otherwise, he concludes, seeks not the salvation of souls but his own glory. In fine, to use the language of that great Missionary Bishop, St. Liguori, "If you are not bound to speak in such a manner as to be intelligible to the lowly and the ignorant, why do you summon them to the church? You only lose your own time and render the word of God useless to them. . . But so far as I am concerned," adds the holy Bishop, "I shall not have to render an account to God for my sermons, for I have always preached in such a manner as to render myself easily understood by the most simple and ignorant of my hearers."

In addition to these arguments, we might also show how the preacher, who neglects to adapt himself to his audience, is unfaithful to the discharge of his duty as an ambassador of God to men; an office which imposes upon him the obligation of making known, in the clearest and most unequivocal manner, the will of his Master, and of doing his utmost to persuade his hearers to obey that will and reduce its precepts to practice. We might show how he might just as well not pretend to preach at all. We might show how such a preacher is utterly without excuse, since there is no man who cannot make himself understood if he will only take the pains to

* 1 Cor. iii. 2. † Job. xxix. 22.

render his discourse clear, simple, and practical; but we have said more than enough to establish the general principle, and it is now time to descend from the consideration of these general principles to their particular application.

It is very rarely that we form a just idea of what a discourse requires to be in order that it may be fully adapted to the capacities and necessities of the special audience whom we have to address. We are too ready to imagine that others can have no difficulty in comprehending that which is so clear to us, and we forget the immense distance which there is between the understanding of the man of liberal education and that of him who has received little or none of such intellectual culture, him who is incapable of seizing any thought, or any turn of expression, which is not put with the greatest clearness; and this is the first mistake which the preacher makes. The second error consists in supposing that, in order to accommodate ourselves to the capacity of our hearers, we must speak in careless, uncultivated, and perhaps undignified language. We forget that the word of God must always be treated with respect, and in such a manner as to command the esteem and veneration of our hearers: and we also forget that simplicity of expression is compatible with the greatest purity and correctness of style. Thirdly, we are too ready to imagine that, in order to speak simply and in such a way as to suit our hearers, we must speak without preparation, expressing whatever presents itself to us at the moment. We could make no greater mistake than this. as we have already shown in Chapter IV. Let it suffice to repeat in this place that, the more ignorant our audience are, the greater is the necessity and obligation of careful preparation, in order to render ourselves intelligible to them. The man of education, of trained mind and acute intellect, will probably have no difficulty in seizing our meaning; but it requires no ordinary preparation, no ordinary amount of patience, of tact, and of reflection, to address with profit and

success an uncultivated and uneducated audience; to accommodate and adapt our ideas of spiritual things, and our way of conceiving them, to the ordinary turn of their thoughts, thoughts so unaccustomed to be employed upon such matters, and running in such different lines from our own. It is, in truth, a matter of no ordinary difficulty to secure this essential simplicity and clearness without forgetting the respect which is ever due to God's holy word; and, yet, unless we succeed, to what end, as St Liguori demands, do we summon the poor and the lowly to listen to that instruction which is more necessary for their soul's salvation than the air which they breathe is for the life of their body, that instruction which we are bound, by solemn obligations which may not be neglected, to impart to them?

In order, then, practically to secure this essential adaptation of our discourse to our audience, we must carefully study their character, dispositions, position in life, their necessities and requirements, and frame our sermon in such a manner as to satisfy these conditions so far as may be within our power. For example, if our audience be composed of simple and unlettered persons, it is evident that a familiar and catechetical instruction is what is most suitable to them. If they consist of educated and more highly cultivated persons, the discourse to be addressed to them must necessarily be of a more elevated character, more elaborate both in conception and execution. If we have to address a mixed congregation, we must select such a subject and such a mode of treatment, as will interest the better educated, and at the same time be of practical utility to the more ignorant. On all ordinary occasions we should be careful to select such simple subjects for our sermons as are within the reach of every capacity. We should be equally careful, in our development of the subject, to employ no proofs or reasons, no comparisons or examples, no historical illustrations, either sacred or profane, which may not be easily

intelligible to any ordinary intellect. The only preacher who is truly useful is he who is content, when such a course may be necessary, to sacrifice learning, and, in one sense, reputation to utility; he who is content to confine himself simply to that which may suit his hearers the most perfectly; he who considers, not what will be most pleasing to himself, or his own educated tastes, but most conducive to the solid instruction and sanctification of his flock.

Having thus discreetly chosen our subject in view of the special needs of our auditory, the next step is to arrange our matter with the greatest order and method. This point has been sufficiently explained in Chapter III, when treating of the plan and unity of a discourse. We will merely add that, of course, nothing conduces so much to order and clearness, as good and exact definitions and divisions. Exact definitions cast a wonderful light upon our subject, and assist us in the most efficacious manner to lead our hearers from the *magis notum* to the *minus notum;* whilst good divisions enable both speaker and audience to see at a glance the principal parts or ramifications of the discourse, thus preventing confusion of ideas, and securing precision of thought and of expression.

(b). Having thus secured the essential adaptation of our subject to our special audience, having arranged our matter in an orderly manner, all that requires to be done for the attainment of perfect clearness, is to select such words and phrases as are most proper to express the idea to be conveyed, and to arrange those words and phrases in such a manner as to form well-constructed, strong, and harmonious sentences.

Clearness depends much upon the employment of such individual words and phrases as are most proper to express the idea to be conveyed. There are no words which are perfectly synonymous in meaning. Hence, there is for every idea some word which expresses it more perfectly and

completely than any other, and that speaker is most clear who best knows how to employ this precise word. Without entering into the purely rhetorical part of the subject, we will lay down some general rules on this matter which the young preacher will find useful.

The first and most essential rule regarding the use of words is that they be pure English. This supposes, not only that the words and phrases which the preacher employs belong to the English language, but that he employs them in the precise manner, and to express the precise meaning, which custom has assigned to them. Words may be faulty in three respects. They may not express the idea which the author intends, but some other which only resembles, or, is akin to it. They may express the idea, but not quite fully and completely; or, they may express it, together with something more than he intends. When a speaker uses words in this loose manner he is said to be guilty of an *Impropriety*. This arises, of course, from an ignorance of the difference or distinction which exists between words that are nearly synonymous, or that have some resemblance in sense or sound. To these faults is opposed the quality of *Precision*, which is only acquired by long study of approved authors, and much careful practice in composition. From the neglect of, or inability to secure, precision, arises what is known as a loose style.

When a speaker employs words which are not recognized as pure English, he is said to be guilty of a *Barbarism*. This fault may be incurred in three ways: 1st. By the use of words that are entirely obsolete, as, *uneath*, *whilom*, ect. 2ndly. By the use of words entirely new, as, *cognition*, *effluxion*, from the Latin; or, *dernier resort*, from the French. This rule, however, suffers many exceptions and is greatly governed by public opinion and taste. 3rdly. By the use of new formations, or by compositions from simple and primitive words which are in present use. Greater license is

allowed in this than in the two preceding cases, provided the English analogy by carefully preserved.

Although, strictly speaking, he might be guilty neither of Impropriety nor Barbarism in their use, the preacher, in view of the special end which is before him, should also avoid all merely scholastic terms, as *essence*, *accidents*, *personality*, *genus* and *species*; all abstract terms, as *spirituality*, *mysticism*, *asceticism*, which the common people do not understand; and all expressions drawn from mystical language, as, the *spiritual life*, the *animal man*, etc, terms, which, although quite plain and familiar to ecclesiastics and spiritual persons, are by no means equally so to even educated laics.

We subjoin the following practical remarks on the employment of words from Rev. Professor Barry's valuable "Grammar of Eloquence."

"In choosing words and phrases, the following rules will serve to guide the writer:—

"1. When the choice lies between two words, one with a *single* meaning, the other with more than one, take the former. 'Obvious' is better than 'apparent,' which means also 'not real.'

"2. Adhere to analogy, as far as possible. '*Con*temporary' is better than '*Co*temporary;' because in words compounded with the inseparable preposition *con*, the *n* is retained before a consonant, but expunged before a vowel.

"3. When no other test will decide between two words, that ought to be preferred which is most agreeable to the ear. 'Delicacy' is preferred to 'delicateness,' 'incapability to 'incapableness.'

"4. A simple form of expression is to be preferred to a complex one. 'Accept' is better than 'accept of,' 'admit' than 'admit of.'

"5. In cases of doubt, adhere to ancient usage.

"6. All words and phrases, which are remarkably harsh and inharmonious, are to be avoided, unless when absolutely

necessary. Such objectionable modes of speech may be sometimes found in good authors. A term composed of words already compounded, or difficult of utterance, is generally to be avoided. Care, however, must be taken not to deprive the language of *strength*, in order to consult for its *elegance*. Inharmonious words are such as, 'unsuccessfulness,' 'inaccessableness,' 'patheticalness.'

"7. Avoid obsolete words; foreign or strange terms unsanctioned; vulgar contractions, as, 'gent' for gentleman, 'gemmen,' for gentlemen; bombastic words, as, 'potentiality' for power; poetical words in prose composition, as 'morn' for morning, 'oft' for often; vulgar, indelicate or slang words; local or provincial terms.

"8. Avoid unmeaning phrases, as, 'with half an eye,' 'less than nothing.'

"9. Avoid affected phrases, as, 'glorious, high-domed, blossoming world.' 'Their hot *life-phrensy* cooled.'

"10. Avoid Greek and Latin and foreign phrases, unless absolutely necessary, as, 'posse comitatus,' 'pro and con,' 'sine qua non,' 'bagatelle,' 'jeu d'esprit.'

"11. Avoid provincial phrases, called 'Anglicisms, Cockneyisms, Scotticisms, Irishisms, Americanisms.'

"12. Avoid vague and general terms whenever a precise idea is to be conveyed. Select the word which conveys most nearly and exactly the idea to be expressed."

(c). In order to secure perfect clearness of language, not only must the words and phrases selected be such as are most proper to express the idea to be conveyed, but they must also be arranged in such a manner as to form well-constructed, strong, and harmonious sentences.

A sentence is a collection of words expressing a judgment or decision of the mind about the agreement or disagreement of ideas. It principally consists, of course, of a subject, a verb, and if the verb be active, an object on which the action denoted by the verb is exercised. A sentence may

be simple or complex, as it contains one or more members; but the principal thing to be borne in mind is that, in every perfect sentence, there is expressed a complete and finished judgment of the mind about the agreement or disagreement of the ideas which it contains. This, although constituting the very foundation, not merely of elegance but of absolute correctness in language, is a matter which is too much overlooked and neglected by young speakers or writers, who, not unfrequently, leave their subject without its verb, or their verb without its object.

Mere correctness in the formation of a sentence is secured by a competent knowledge of English Grammar; and this, of course, we take for granted in the preacher or ecclesiastical student. Our present purpose is, not to consider those qualities which secure mere correctness, but those which produce strong, vigorous, and harmonious sentences. Taking also for granted a due knowledge and appreciation of that fundamental rule in English Composition, that the words or members most nearly related should be placed as near as possible to each other in the sentence, in order that their mutual relation may obviously and immediately appear, we shall probably best describe the qualities which produce strong and well-constructed sentences by indicating the defects which produce the contrary result.

Weakness and obscurity of language arise principally from three causes, from a bad arrangement of adverbs and pronouns, from the doubtful position of a circumstance in the middle of a sentence, and from too artificial a construction of such sentence.

The faulty collocation of adverbs and pronouns is the source of endless confusion, and of much weakness, in the composition of sentences. The only practical rule on the matter is, to place the adverb in such a position as to indicate most clearly the verb, adjective, or other adverb, which it qualifies. Ordinarily, adverbs, and more especially "only"

and "always," are placed as near as possible to the word which they are intended to qualify. Personal pronouns should clearly point out the noun for which they stand. They should not be introduced too frequently in the same sentence. An indiscreet and too frequent repetition of personal pronouns in a sentence is a source of great ambiguity. Whenever, on account of such repetition, the noun to which the pronoun refers may become at all doubtful or obscure, the noun must be repeated. The relative pronoun should, instantly and without the least obscurity, present its antecedent to the mind of the reader or hearer; and, in order to secure this, it should be placed as near as possible to such antecedent; since, notwithstanding all our precautions, the relatives, *who*, *which*, *that*, *whose*, and *whom*, often create a certain degree of ambiguity in a sentence, even when there can be no doubt as to the antecedent.

Weakness and obscurity sometimes result from the doubtful position of a circumstance or clause in the middle of a sentence. The preacher should, as much as possible, carefully avoid all such circumlocutions, incidental phrases, useless epithets or expressions, as merely add word to word without in any way developing his meaning, or rendering it more clear. He should necessarily aim at disposing the words and members of his sentence in such a manner as to bring out the sense to the best advantage, to render the impression which he designs to make most full and complete, and to give to every word and member its full weight and force. To secure this he must prune his sentences of all redundant words and members, so that every word shall present a distinct or separate idea, and every member a distinct or separate thought.

Weakness and obscurity also arise from too artificial a construction of a sentence, as when its structure is too complicated, or when the sense is too long suspended by parenthesis, or too difficult to seize. These long-winded sentences

are, according to St. Francis of Sales, the pest of preaching. They weary even an intellectual audience, whilst they render the preacher's meaning unintelligible to the simple and uneducated. When, from the nature of the case, the period necessarily contains several members, and thus becomes more or less complicated, a *short* parenthesis introduced in the proper place will not in the least interfere with clearness, and may add both strength and vivacity to the sentence. Without falling into the opposite extreme, the preacher, as a general rule, will do well to prefer short sentences to long ones. We have said, without falling into the opposite extreme, since, if the sentences be too much cut up, the preacher's style becomes harsh and irregular, dry, meagre, and undignified.

Although, absolutely speaking, a sentence may be well-constructed and strong without being harmonious, still, as a general rule, such a sentence will possess some degree of harmony, since this harmony is the result of a happy choice of words, and a felicitous arrangement of the members of a period, qualities which are found, in a higher or lower degree, in every perfect sentence. Those words are most pleasing and most conducive to harmony which are composed of smooth and liquid sounds, with a proper mixture of vowels and consonants; without any harsh or grating consonants, or many open vowels, which cause a hiatus or disagreeable gaping of the mouth. According to Blair, it may always be assumed as a general principle that, whatever sounds are difficult in pronunciation, are in the same proportion, harsh and painful to the ear. Vowels give softness, consonants strength, to the sounds of words. The music of language requires a just proportion of both. Long words are commonly more pleasing to the ear than monosyllables, on account of the composition or succession of sounds which they present to it. Those long words are most musical which do not run wholly either upon long or short syllables, but

are composed of a mixture of both; such as, *repent*, *produce*, *impetuosity*, etc., etc. As regards the arrangement of its members, it is evident that the music of a sentence depends much on their proper distribution, and on the close or cadence of the whole. On this point it will suffice to say, that the rests of the voice should be so arranged at the termination of each member of the sentence as to make the breathing of the speaker easy, and that they should fall at such distances as to bear a certain musical proportion to each other. This musical proportion, or cadence, requires the greatest care and most skilful management. It depends, probably, more on the possession of what we call a musical ear, and a cultivated taste, than on any technical rules, although rhetoricians lay down many rules on this matter which may be studied with profit. We may assert as a general principle that, in order to render our cadence perfect, the longest members and most sonorous words in our sentence must be reserved for the conclusion. Amongst our English classics not many are distinguished for musical arrangement, or for any very laboured efforts after mere harmony. We may safely affirm that no writer, ancient or modern, equals Cicero in the harmonious structure and disposition of his periods, in the *plena ac numerosa oratio*. He studied this matter with a care that perhaps was excessive, but with a success that was complete and unequivocal.

Thus—without ever descending to vulgarity or forgetting what is due to the dignity of the pulpit—by a careful study of the manners, habits, and intellectual calibre of those whom he is to address, so that, as far as is possible, he may conceive his subject as they conceive it, and render his ideas in those figures, comparisons, and turns of thought which are most familiar to them, as being those which they themselves are accustomed to employ; by a discreet and practical application of the simple rules which we have indicated, and which his own ever-growing experience will

best teach him how to apply to special circumstances and to peculiar wants, the young preacher will obtain for his discourse the essential quality of clearness.

In conclusion, we will only remark that, whilst the preacher, in his instructions to his flock, will aim at correctness and purity of language, he will also remember that for him, as a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in view of the special end which he must necessarily propose to himself, there is something infinitely more important than any mere correctness or elegance of language. Hence, whenever it may be necessary in order to render himself better understood, he will not hesitate to sacrifice the graces, and, in one sense, even the purity of language. Following the counsel of St. Augustine, he will study the most intelligible, rather than the most elegant, manner of expressing what he has to say. *Evidentiæ appetitus aliquando negligit verba cultiora, nec curat quid bene sonet, sed quid bene indicet quod ostendere intendit.** For, as asks this holy doctor, what is the use of expressing our ideas in the most polished manner, of what use is the purity and elegance of our style, if our hearers do not comprehend our meaning? *Quid prodest locutionis integritas quam non sequitur intellectus audientis?*† And he further illustrates his meaning by a very ingenious comparison. *Quid prodest*, he inquires, *clavis aurea si aperire quod volumus non potest, aut quid obest lignea si hoc potest?*‡ But, let the preacher bear in mind, whilst he strives to follow these wise precepts in his practice, that this style of speaking requires both intellect and skill. Let him not delude himself by supposing that, in order to speak with this perfect simplicity of language and of style, he must therefore descend to what is low or undignified. *Hæc sic ornatum detrahit ut sordes non contrahat.*§ Let him rather remember that in this, as in many other cases, the perfection of art

* De Doct. Christ. lib. iv. 24.
† Ibid.
‡ Ibid.
§ Ibid.

consists in concealing art *Ars artis celare artem.* It is of such simple instruction as this that Cicero is speaking when he says, *Negligentia est diligens ;** and he says what is most true, since this simple, and, at first sight, apparently negligent manner of preaching, indicates the man who is more solicitous about the solid instruction which he is to impart to his flock than about the mere words in which he is to express it; the man who is much more anxious about the interests of his Master, and the welfare of his people, than his own gratification as a scholar, or his reputation as a preacher.

It is scarcely necessary to add that instruction requires a plain, simple, and unadorned style. There may be place for beautiful figures of speech, and powerful oratorical developments, in other parts of a discourse; but there is no room for them, and nothing but the worst taste would seek to introduce them, into the purely explanatory and instructive portions of a sermon.

SECTION III.

THE MANNER OF PROVING THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

We have said that the instruction which forms the substantial portion of the body of a discourse comprises two things, viz., a clear explanation of Christian doctrine, and the establishment of it by solid proofs and arguments. We have already shown that, although there are cases in which nothing more than a simple explanation and practical application of the Christian doctrine is required, it is not sufficient, as an ordinary rule, to explain the truths of religion. These truths must be sustained by strong and convincing arguments. In the last section we endeavoured to explain the nature and the manner of imparting this necessary explanation of Christian doctrine, and it now remains to consider

* Orat. lxxvii.

the mode according to which the argumentation, or sustaining of our proposition by solid proofs, is to be conducted.

There are two principal methods employed by orators in the conduct of their argumentation, the analytical and the synthetical. When the orator conceals his intention, and gradually leads his hearers on from one known truth to another, until the conclusion is forced upon them as the natural consequence of a chain of propositions, he uses the analytic method. For example, wishing to prove the existence of God, the preacher sets out by showing that whatever exists must have had a beginning, that whatever had a beginning must have had a cause; that man exists and had a beginning, and that therefore he must have had a cause; but that, from his nature and constitution, he could have been called into existence by no other than the one, great, infinite, Supreme First Cause, or, God. This is a very artful and very beautiful mode of reasoning, but there are very few subjects which will admit it, and there are fewer occasions in which the Christian preacher will find it proper to employ it. The mode of reasoning, more fitly and generally adopted by the pulpit orator, is the synthetic, in which the point or points to be proved are fairly and openly laid down, and one argument after another is brought to bear upon them until the hearer is fully and completely convinced. Thus, in a sermon the preacher openly lays down, in his proposition, the one great Christian truth which he intends to carry home to the hearts of his hearers, and, then, in his division, he unfolds the different points of view under which he proposes to consider and establish this truth.

It is evident that the effect of an argument depends upon the tact with which it is chosen, the skill with which it is brought to bear at the most felicitous moment, and the force with which it is urged, or, in other words, amplified. Hence, we lay down, and now proceed to establish the general principle, that the excellency of this most essential

part of a discourse may be said to depend on three points, the invention and selection of arguments, the due arrangement of them, and their amplification.

SECTION IV.

SELECTION OF ARGUMENTS.

By the invention and selection of arguments we understand the collection of a certain number of solid and convincing proofs, whether they be the fruit of our own intellect, or whether they be gleaned from approved sources, bearing upon the matter in hand—the truth to be established. Ever keeping in mind how essential solid argument is to every really good discourse, since, although he may not absolutely win the hearts of his hearers by it, it is the foundation upon which all his ulterior efforts in the way of persuasion are to be built, the preacher will probably be assisted in his selection of proofs by attending to a few simple and practical rules which we venture to suggest.

1. He ought never to select and advance from the pulpit any argument which he does not feel to be really solid. The preacher forgets his high calling, and the dignity of the Gospel which he preaches, when he endeavours to sustain it by a weak or foolish argument. There is no truth of our Holy Faith which is not supported by the most powerful and convincing arguments, and if a preacher does not bring forward these proofs it is either because he has not taken the trouble to study the matter on which he thus presumes to speak without preparation; or, because he has forgotten his theology. The very least that we expect in a preacher is an accurate and expedite knowledge of moral theology, and of the Catechism of the Council of Trent. With such a knowledge he can never go astray in teaching, nor will he ever be under the necessity of advancing a weak or foolish argument

in support, or, to speak more truly, in derision of, our sublime and Holy Faith. If he have never acquired this necessary knowledge he most certainly is not in a position to enter the pulpit, or take upon himself the office of teacher in matters so holy in themselves, and so momentous in their consequences, where the propounder of false doctrine, or the unsound teacher, may be the cause of perdition to many souls. If he have not taken the trouble to keep up the knowledge which he acquired during the years of his ecclesiastical probation, with so much pains and hard study on his own part; and with so much assiduous care and zealous watchfulness on the part of his masters, he has good reason to tremble when, in his culpable ignorance he ascends the pulpit, lest he incur the terrible denunciation, *Maledictus qui facit opus Dei negligenter.** The preacher who advances a weak or foolish argument, exposes our Holy Faith to the derision of the impious who readily discover its unsoundness, whilst, at the same time, they suppose or persuade themselves that the other dogmas of our religion rest upon an equally rotten foundation. Such an argument is the ruin of a sermon, since one false or foolish proof lays the whole discourse open to suspicion; it inspires our hearers with a contempt for ourselves and our doctrine, and it is very frequently the only part which they retain and of which they speak. Better and more becoming a thousand times, not to attempt to advance arguments in support of the eternal truths of God, if we are not able to bring forward such as are solid in themselves, and worthy of the Gospel which we are privileged to preach.

2. The preacher should not endeavour to crowd into one sermon of half-an-hour's duration all the proofs which can be brought to bear upon the matter which he treats. It is vastly better to select those which, *positis ponendis*, he considers the best for his purpose, without troubling himself

* Jerem. xlviii. 10.

about the others. As we have just said, it is impossible to compress within the limits of one sermon all the proofs which may be adduced in support of any truth, doctrinal or moral. The preacher who may attempt to do so, can at the best but merely glance at his arguments without entering thoroughly into any one of them; and, thus treating them, he will produce a much weaker impression, and do less towards convincing his hearers, than if he had confined himself to a few good arguments and developed them in a more masterly and more complete manner. Moreover, there are comparatively few, in an ordinary congregation, who are able to follow a long series of arguments and demonstrations. Even supposing that an audience were able to follow the preacher, such a course of proceeding would necessarily render a sermon dry and uninteresting. Directing his discourse entirely to the head, the preacher would leave no room for those powerful appeals to the heart which move the will, carry it captive, and render it pliant to his purpose.

3. The preacher ought to take great care to select those proofs which are not merely best in themselves, but best relatively to his audience, and to prefer those which they will seize most easily, which will interest them the most powerfully, and produce the greatest impression upon them. It is a very great mistake to suppose that the proof which is strongest *per se*, is always, therefore, the strongest, *relate ad auditorem*. It requires no words to prove that if an argument be above the capacity of one's hearers, or if it be calculated from its nature to make no impression upon them, it will be weak, fruitless, and ineffective in their regard, no matter how strong it may be in itself. For example, the metaphysical argument for the existence of God which is derived from the necessity of a first cause is most solid and unanswerable in itself, and yet any one can see that it would be useless if addressed, in its purely metaphysical shape, to an audience of simple and unlearned persons, from the very

fact that it would be above their comprehension. The preacher, and the young one especially, should therefore be on his guard against that natural impulse which inclines us to believe that others, although simple and unlettered, will easily seize those arguments which appear so plain and conclusive to us. He should be equally on his guard against employing profound arguments, or uncommon and far-fetched proofs, when addressing unlearned persons, such as form the majority of all ordinary congregations. His feeling should always incline towards the more common and ordinary arguments in favour of any doctrine. They are pretty certain to be the best and most powerful when considered relatively to an audience. They have become common simply because they are so true, and a congregation always listens to them with pleasure and profit, especially when the preacher takes the pains to present them in a pleasing and attractive manner.

4. In order to convince himself of the relative strength of his arguments, the preacher ought to ask himself whether, if they were proposed coolly and calmly in ordinary conversation, they would produce the effect which he desires; and whether, if he were in the place of the sinner whom he seeks to convert, he himself would be converted by his own arguments. If they will bear this test he may safely and confidently adopt them. Whilst treating of this very important matter, the selection of arguments, we may earnestly recommend to the attention of the young preacher the method which was adopted on this point by the great orator Massillon. "When," he says, "I have to preach a sermon, I imagine that some one has consulted me on a matter of very grave importance on which he and I do not agree. I apply, therefore all the powers of my intellect and my heart to convince and to persuade him. I press him, I exhort him, and I do not leave him until I have fairly and completely gained him to my side." Admirable words, and full of practical wisdom!

Imitating the example of this great orator, this master in Israel, the preacher ought, when selecting his arguments, to imagine himself face to face with some one who is deeply imbued with false ideas, or inexact notions, on the matter which he is about to treat. He applies himself, in the first place, to explain the matter in hand so clearly that it cannot possibly be misunderstood. Then, he proceeds to advance his arguments, frequently asking himself, Is this proof solid, is it clear, is it unanswerable? Is it adapted to the understanding of my adversary? Will he comprehend it? What difficulty can he advance against it, and how shall I answer him fully and triumphantly? Will he, as a reasonable and honest man, be obliged to admit the force of my arguments? When the preacher can give to himself a satisfactory answer on all these points he may be satisfied with the choice of arguments which he has made; and rest assured that if he employ them with a pure intention, and advance them with simple, earnest zeal, they will be powerful instruments in his hands for procuring the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls, the end and aim, as we have frequently remarked, of all his labours and of all his preaching.

SECTION V.

ARRANGEMENT OF ARGUMENTS.

Supposing our arguments properly chosen, it is evident that their due effect will depend in a great measure upon the manner in which they are arranged. If they be not placed in due order, if they jostle or embarrass one another, if they do not all bear directly and with the fullest weight upon the subject in debate, it is clear that much of their effect will be lost. The strength of an army does not depend so much upon the number of soldiers which it contains as upon the

skill with which they are disposed and arranged. In the same way, our arguments must be arranged, combined, and disposed, so as to form one perfect whole, having for its end the perfect development and establishment of one, great, leading truth. It is not so easy, however, to lay down specific rules for the arrangement of arguments, as it is to prove the necessity of such an order; since the effect of their arrangement depends, not merely upon the matter of the arguments themselves, but upon an infinite number of circumstances which cannot be foreseen. Peculiar circumstances may have such an influence upon the arrangement of one's proofs, that it may sometimes be expedient to commence a discourse with arguments which, according to received rules, should be placed at the conclusion. Whilst, therefore, we proceed to lay down some general rules on this matter, we take it for granted that these rules must suffer many exceptions, and that on this point, more perhaps than any other, much must be left to the good sense and experience of the preacher.

1. As an ordinary rule, the order of our proofs will be suggested by the very nature of the subject which we treat. In a sermon, too, the preacher advances in the first place, the arguments which will help his hearers to understand and appreciate the full force of those which are to follow. He passes from what is more general to what is particular, from the genus to the species, from that which is easy to that which is difficult, from the known to the unknown. Nature herself suggests to us to group together those arguments which appertain to the same order, and which, being comprised in the same general idea, tend to the same end. It is contrary both to good sense and to order, to pass from one line of arguments to another, and then return after a while to the first. For example, it is contrary to good order to establish our point in the first place by proofs from authority, then to proceed to proofs from reason; returning in the end

to arguments from authority. Thus, if we were treating of any virtue or vice, it would be essentially out of order to speak first of its obligation, then of its effects, and lastly to return to the proofs for its obligation. We must take each point in due order, as *ex. g.*, the *necessity* of humility, and its *utility* as shown in the advantages which it brings to man, peace with God, with his neighbour, and himself; and having sufficiently proved each point, we must pass on to the next without returning to that which has been already established. Whilst nature herself suggests to us to group together those arguments which are in the same order, she points out with equal clearness the impropriety of blending those which are of a separate nature. All arguments tend to prove one or other of three things, that something is *true*, that it is morally *right* and *just*, or that it is *profitable* and *good*, since these are the three great principles by which mankind is governed—truth, duty, and interest. At the same time, the arguments for establishing these great motives of action are generically distinct, and, as they are addressed to different principles in human nature, should be kept separate and distinct in reasoning; and not, as is often the case in sermons, be confusedly blended under one general topic. If, for example, I am preaching on the love of my neighbour, I may take my first argument from the inward satisfaction which a benevolent temper affords, my second from the obligation which Christ imposes upon us of loving our neighbour, and my third from its tendency to procure us the good will of those around us. My arguments are good in themselves, but, according to Dr. Blair, I have arranged them wrong. My first and third are taken from considerations of *interest*, and between these I have introduced one which rests solely upon *duty*, thus rendering my reasoning obscure and confused.

2. The second thing to be observed in the order of arguments is to dispose them in such a manner that, as far as

possible, the discourse may continually advance in strength by way of climax, *ut augeatur semper et increscat oratio;* that each proof may excel that which preceded it; that the concluding ones may be the strongest, the best adapted to move our hearers, to leave them without reply, the subjects of an intimate and profound conviction. Some rhetoricians assign the following order of proofs—*Fortiora*, *Fortia*, *Fortissima*. They suppose the *argumenta fortia* to be somewhat weak and feeble, and so place them between the strong arguments with which the orator should commence, and those still more powerful ones with which he should conclude his discourse. It may be well doubted whether the Christian orator is ever under the necessity of employing any arguments except those which are *Fortiora* and *Fortissima*. If it ever be necessary or expedient to use such as are less strong, less conclusive, or merely suasory, the above is certainly the order in which they should be arranged. In any case, the preacher reserves his most telling arguments for the conclusion of his discourse, since the last impressions remain most vividly impressed upon the minds of his hearers, and since this is the decisive moment of the argumentative conflict. Now or never is he to gain his victory. By a succession of powerful and telling proofs he has been gradually gaining upon his hearers, gradually preparing the way for complete and unequivocal conviction, and, now, like a skilful general, he comes in at the decisive moment with all the force of his last and most unanswerable argument, and carries all before him. And not only must the preacher most carefully follow this form of argumentation as regards the various proofs by which he may establish any one point of his discourse, but also as regards the points themselves. The strongest and most telling point must be placed the last. Nor must he lose sight of what we have already sufficiently dwelt upon in another place—viz., that, on all these matters, we speak not absolutely but relatively. Hence, in the plan

of a discourse at page 67 he will see that we have put in the first place the argument deduced from the views of God, and in the last, that derived from the sentiments of different classes of men at the hour of their death. Now, the argument from the views of God is *per se* a much stronger argument than the one derived from the sentiments of the dying, and yet we have put this in the last place because being, in some measure, an *argumentum ad hominem*, it possesses a much greater *relative* force, and if well developed will produce a much more powerful effect, simply because it is so much more sensible. In the same way, although the proofs which rest on the divine authority are naturally stronger than those which are derived from reason or example, it does not always follow that they are to be put in the last place, simply because there are many circumstances in which, although stronger in themselves, they are less effective than those other arguments which, although essentially weaker, have a more immediate and telling influence upon the heart of man.

Hence, the order so generally followed in arranging our proofs:—1. From Holy Scripture, or the Divine Authority. 2. From the Fathers, as explaining, or commenting on the meaning of Scripture, etc, etc. 3. From the motives furnished by reason: as the utility and advantages of virtue, or the evil consequences of the contrary vice. 4. From examples and comparisons: as illustrating the matter and rendering it more practical and sensible. 5. From the answers to any objections which the preacher may think fit to advance. This is the order, which we are inclined, *omnibus pensatis*, to consider the most useful, and it is that which is most generally followed. It is that recommended by Father Lohner, no mean authority on the matter, who thus speaks of it. *Hæc methodus, uti clarissima et facillima, ita pro plebe instruenda aptissima est.** It is also the one recommended by St. Francis de Sales.

* De munere concionandi.

Canon Bellefroid, in his erudite and elegant work, seems to prefer an order which differs somewhat from the above. "It will be found useful," he writes, "to employ, in the first place, proofs from reason. These kind of proofs are adapted to the capacity of all the world, and they prepare the way for the authorities which we intend to invoke. Next will follow Holy Scripture, which, in seeming to make some concession to reason, will really subjugate and gain it to the side of the Divine Authority. As there may be some ambiguity or obscurity of meaning in the texts which are quoted, we introduce the testimony of the Fathers, who are at once the most natural and the most authoritative interpreters of Holy Writ. Finally, we introduce examples which may help to confirm the doctrine which we have laid down, render it more striking, and encourage our hearers to reduce it to practice by placing attractive and engaging models before their eyes. The order, then, followed by Bellefroid, and it is also that of Pere Caussin the Jesuit, is—1. Proofs from reason. 2. From Scripture. 3. From the Fathers. 4. Examples.

It is probably a matter of very little consequence which of these arrangements the preacher may adopt. As we have just remarked, we are inclined to prefer the former as an ordinary rule. It is scarcely necessary to add that this arrangement is equally applicable to the discourse which contains a formal division, as to that which merely aspires to the establishment of the general proposition which may be laid down without any attempt to divide it into its component parts. For example, if the discourse be not divided into "points," the *general proposition* may be proved from Scripture, the Fathers, reason illustrated by examples, etc., etc., and, then the 1st Point of the sermon will be proofs from Scripture, etc., and the 2nd Point, proofs from reason, etc. If the proposition be divided, then *each point* may be established in precisely the same order, the only difference being, that, when there are several points to be proved, the various

arguments will not, of course, bear the same amount of development as when the preacher has simply to sustain the proposition in its general aspect, without any relation to those special bearings which are brought out in a division.

We have said that our arguments *may* be arranged in this order, but let not the young preacher suppose that he is therefore always bound to prove his proposition, or the points into which he may divide his discourse, from Scripture, the Fathers, reason, etc. It may sometimes be quite sufficient to establish his point from Scripture alone, or from Tradition, or from reason. It is difficult, as we remarked at the commencement of this section, to lay down any specific rules on this matter, since it is impossible to draw up any rules which will meet all the circumstances of the case. We have done all that was in our power, viz, to glance at those general principles on which all are agreed, and we must leave their special application to the good sense, the watchful zeal, and the ever-growing experience of the pastor of souls.

All that remains to be said on this matter is, that, after having arranged the order of his proofs, the preacher must take care to connect them naturally one with another, so that they may constitute the integral and well-arranged members of a body whose special characteristic is unity. This connection which binds one proof to another, one part of a discourse to another, is known by the name of "Transition." Transition is that form of expression, or that turn of thought, which the preacher employs in order that he may pass naturally, without violence or abruptness, from one object to another, from one argument to another. This natural transition is of the utmost importance, since, without it, a discourse is nothing more than a hash, composed of various parts which approach without ever uniting, which succeed one another without following.* The most excellent

* Van Hemel. Précis de Rhétorique Sacrée.

transitions are those which spring from the very essence of the subject itself, and have an equal relation to that which the preacher has said as to that which he is about to say.

"Transitions, which are only built on the mechanism of the style, and merely consist in a fictitious connection between the last word of the paragraph which finishes, and the first word of the sentence which begins, cannot, with propriety, be admitted as natural, but are rather forced combinations. True rhetorical Transitions are such as follow the course of the reasoning, or sentiment, with ease, almost without art, and unperceived by the hearer; such as unite the materials of the discourse, instead of merely suspending some phrases upon each other; such as bind the whole together, without obliging the preacher to compose a new exordium to each subdivision which his plan exhibits to him; such as form an orderly and methodical arrangement, by the simple unfolding of the ideas, in some measure imperceptible to the orator himself: such as call for, and correspond with, each other by an inevitable analogy, and not by an unexpected association; such, in fine, as meditation produces by suggesting valuable thoughts, not such as the pen furnishes in its search after combined resemblances." *

Massillon, in his sermon on the charity of the great, thus passes from the first part of his discourse to the second. "If," says he, "charity towards the people is the first duty of the great, is it not also the greatest luxury of their greatness?" Instead of searching for some intermediate idea by which to pass from one point of the discourse to another, as a less skilful orator would have done, he makes use of the very fundamental idea of the whole discourse for this purpose. Arguments connected by skilful Transitions are, according to Cicero, like stones so thoroughly polished that they unite without the aid of cement. A discourse whose

* Maury.

parts are thus skilfully united resembles a work of art which is cast in one piece, where the eye looks in vain for seam or joint. As the object of these Transitions is to enable the preacher to pass gracefully and without violence from one argument or point to another, it follows that the more natural they are the more effectually they will attain their end.

SECTION VI.

AMPLIFICATION OF ARGUMENTS, ITS NATURE AND NECESSITY. SOURCES OF AMPLIFICATION:—SACRED SCRIPTURE; THE FATHERS; THEOLOGY, SCHOLASTIC AND ASCETIC; COMPARISONS, EXAMPLES, AND PARABLES; REASON.

ALTHOUGH the effect of our reasoning depends very much upon the due selection and arrangement of our arguments, it depends still more upon their amplification, or, in other words, upon the force, vigour, beauty, and practical application, with which they are put. The student will see at a glance that "pure reasoning" and amplification, although most strictly connected, are not precisely one and the same thing. The latter is a development of the former. United, they present truth in its strongest and most engaging colours, and in such a manner as to bring it home, not only to the understanding, but also to the heart. Reasoning embraces all sorts of questions, and all sorts of discourses, and reduces everything to a syllogism. Amplification comes into play when it is not merely sufficient to form a good argument, but when it is equally necessary to form it in such a manner, and to express it in such language, as will render it *intelligible* to the persons to whom it is addressed, and *powerful* for the purpose which the speaker proposes to himself in employing it. Reasoning addresses itself simply to the understanding, and has no other object than to convince. Amplification

addresses itself to the heart as well, and seeks to influence and act upon the will, thus partaking of the nature both of conviction and of persuasion. It is quite certain that every good argument is reducible to a syllogism, but it is equally certain that the orator must disguise the naked skeleton, the form of his argument, under the beauties of language. The syllogism holds the same relation to a discourse as the bones and muscles do to the human body. These, if seen in their nakedness, present a repulsive spectacle, and the syllogism, although containing the form of a vigorous argument, is simply distasteful and loathsome when presented to an audience in its logical dryness, and its uninviting plainness. Putting persuasion altogether out of the question, it would be simply impossible to get an audience to follow that succession of dry, sharp, conclusive syllogisms which would be the glory of a logician. Being under the painful necessity of following the discourse with an attention at full strain, since if one link of the chain of reasoning be lost the whole argument is irretrievably gone, they would soon give up attempting to follow at all; whilst there would be many who, spite of their deepest attention, would not be able to comprehend the drift or bearing of an argument conducted in this manner. The discourse being thus rendered unintelligible to many, and unpardonably dry to all, would become altogether useless and without fruit. We may express, and fully announce a great leading truth in even a single syllogism, but the force of an argument thus expressed would most surely escape the comprehension of any ordinary congregation, unless it were explained and developed; or, in other words, amplified. The germ of the argument ought to be contained in, or, at least, be easily reducible to a syllogism, but it is the duty of the rhetorician, in contradistinction to the logician, to develope this germ, and, by the aid of language and the resources of oratory, to render it not merely intelligible, but pleasing and attractive to all.

This is what is understood by the amplification of arguments, and, hence, it is no wonder that the great masters of oratory attach so much importance to it. *Una laus et propria oratoris*, says Cicero, *summa laus eloquentiæ, amplificare rem ornando.* Amplification is the great means of rendering argument telling and effective. Instruction exposes an obligation, a dry proof establishes its claim, amplification explains its nature, its grandeur and its claims. Amplification acts upon a proposition like rain upon the seed, causing it to grow and to develop itself. Amplification renders clear and intelligible that which before was perhaps scarcely perceptible. It throws light upon all the parts of a discourse, by bringing them out under different aspects and different points of view, giving warmth to what was cold, and life to what was dead. It is true to say that by amplification arguments are really explained and rendered intelligible, that they are proved and made to penetrate the heart, realizing the truth of the principle advanced by Quintilian when he affirms, that the real strength of the orator is shown in the force with which he can amplify and develop his arguments. From all this it sufficiently follows, how much the success of a preacher depends, not only upon his powers of reasoning correctly, but of reasoning strongly and vigorously, of bringing his argument before his hearers not only in its truest, but also in its most attractive light, and adorned with all those graces which can be imparted to it by vivid conception, by brilliant images and ideas, and by chaste and polished language. Let the young preacher, therefore, aspire to reason closely and well; but let him also aspire to reason with elegance and vigour. Let him strive his utmost to gain such a command of language as will enable him to clothe his reasons in the most just and beautiful terms; to present them in all their varied aspects to his people; to shield them under the authority of God's word; to render them sensible by comparisons and examples; to support them

by arguments *ad hominem*, as his experience and prudence shall suggest to him. Everything which serves to cultivate his taste, elevate his style, and render him a man of pure mind and of deep feelings, will serve to cultivate and develop his powers of amplification.

Whilst, however, the young preacher will certainly aspire to this faculty of amplification, he will at the same time be discreet in its employment. In the first place, he will never use it except to render his discourse more clear, more solid, or more effective. If his idea be already sufficiently developed, and sufficiently intelligible to his flock, it would be worse than useless to spend time in amplifying it. The truth would be simply smothered under a superfluity of expression, and obscurity instead of greater clearness would be the result. And, hence it is, that a great facility of speaking is often a very fatal gift. Secondly, he will amplify, not by merely heaping together empty words and meaningless phrases, but by multiplying the sense and adding something new to what he has already said. This is true amplification, and it is very different from that which consists in repeating the same idea in almost synonymous terms. Thirdly, he will amplify in such a manner that his discourse may continually increase in force, that, as he advances, it may become more clear, more animated, more strong and energetic. Fourthly, he will do well to follow the example of Massillon, who used to imagine that his adversary was present, and to study to arrange all his amplification in such a manner as to pursue him with all the force of his reason and with all the vehemence of his zeal, until he was completely gained and won to the side of virtue.

Premising that our remarks are equally applicable to that verbal amplification of proofs which consists in words, as to that real amplification which is founded either in climax, in the application of comparisons and examples, or in the consideration of the circumstances of the subject; and

begging the student to bear in mind the principles laid down at page 52 when treating of "The Meditation and Conception of our Subject," we will now briefly consider the leading sources whence the preacher is to draw, as well his proofs themselves, as his ideas and his matter for their amplification, and these may be reduced to two—viz, the *loci communes* of preaching, and the *loci communes* of rhetoric.

By the *loci communes* of preaching we understand the Sacred Scripture, the writings of the Fathers, and the acts of Councils, together with all those works of scholastic and ascetic theology which form the overflowing fountain whence the preacher can always draw, and where he can never fail to find ample matter, with which to instruct and to move on all those great subjects which he will most frequently be called to treat; such as the importance of salvation, death, judgment, heaven and hell, the love of God and the passion of Jesus Christ, the general considerations upon the benefits of God, the virtues and vices, the sacraments, prayer, etc., etc. Premising too, that the *loci communes* of preaching correspond to the "Extrinsic Sources or Topics" of the rhetorician, and the *loci communes* of rhetoric to the "Intrinsic Sources or Topics," we now proceed to devote a few words to the consideration of these *loci* as they are technically called.

It does not require many words to prove that the Holy Scripture must always be the preacher's great resource, the storehouse ever full of the most useful and sublime matter which he can require. Indeed, his preaching is but a development of this Divine book, an explanation of the word of God. *Prædica verbum*, says the great apostle of the Gentiles. Being, as he is, the ambassador of God to men, it is fitting that the preacher should receive from that God Himself the word which he is charged to carry to them; a messenger from heaven, it is becoming that he speak in its language. This word of God, this language of heaven, is

contained in Holy Writ, and it is just in proportion as the preacher makes it the foundation of his discourse that he has a right to say with St. Paul, *In me loquitur Christus. . . Posuit in nobis verbum reconciliationis. . . Deo exhortante per nos.**

The word of man is at best but dead, and incapable of bringing forth fruit unto salvation; but the word of God is full of life, containing within itself a hidden virtue which persuades and moves. It is, as the Holy Ghost expresses it, a fire which inflames the most insensible, a hammer which rends the heart that is as hard as the very rock, a sword which penetrates even into the most hidden parts of the soul. Experience amply proves that there is a special grace attached to the words of Holy Writ, and that the truths which the preacher builds upon some text of Scripture, the bearing of which he has intimately mastered and powerfully developed, are those which produce the greatest impression and remain longest in the minds of the hearers. But, if Holy Scripture be thus useful to an audience, how much more precious is it to the preacher himself? The Apostle tells us that it is equally useful for all the ends of preaching, whether it be for the establishing of dogma or the explaining of the mysteries of the Faith, for the developing of moral or the destruction of vice. *Omnis scriptura divinitus inspirata, utilis est ad docendum, ad arguendum, ad corripiendum, ad erudiendum in justitia, ut perfectus sit homo Dei, ad omne opus bonum instructus.*† St. Augustine assures us that the preacher will excel in the ministry of the word in proportion as he is a master of Holy Scripture. *Sapienter dicit tanto magis vel minus, quanto in scripturis sanctis magis minusve profecit.*‡ In effect, the word of God imparts to the language of the sacred orator an authority and a force which it can never derive from any other source. As man naturally carries in his heart, together with the idea of the divinity, a

* 2 Cor. v. 19. † 2 Tim. iii, 16, 17. ‡ De Doct. Christ., lib. iv. 5.

deep veneration for it, so the consecrated style of the holy writings imparts to a discourse a touching majesty which inspires us with virtuous sentiments, and which commands our respect and submission all the more effectually that it obliges us to love the truth which is preached. The unction of the Holy Ghost flows like a sweet odour upon those sacred writings. The love of God, devotion to his service, charity towards our neighbour, and forgetfulness of self; in a word, all the most tender, the most sublime, and the most holy affections which can animate the soul of man, spring from them like a fragrant perfume. We cannot read these sacred pages without feeling a deep love for their author, and an ardent desire of fulfilling His holy precepts. It is easy to recognize the preacher who is penetrated with their spirit by the unction which flows so sweetly from his lips. As we have shown in a former part of this work, whatever subject he may have to treat, the preacher who is well versed in the Scriptures will there find something with which to embellish his matter, to render it more touching and full of interest. Not only will he there find examples suitable to every condition and state of life, as Joseph, Ruth, Job, Jeremiah, the Machabees, Abraham, David, Saul, etc.; but he will also discover the most magnificent figures of speech, and the highest flights which oratory has ever attained, strown over its pages as thickly as the stars in the firmament of heaven. These beauties of the Sacred Writings, these fruits of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, soar immeasurably above the loftiest efforts of profane orators and poets, and furnish the preacher who knows how to avail himself of them, with an inexhaustible store of matter by the aid of which he can, with the greatest facility, impart life and warmth, energy and strength, to his discourse.

Hence, we see that the Holy Fathers have always regarded the Scripture as the principal source whence the preacher is to draw matter for the amplification of his

arguments. What they taught in this regard they first practised themselves. They made these divine writings the subject of their continual study. In them they found the substance of their most solid instructions They developed the histories which are contained in the Bible, and explained its difficulties. They applied its lessons to all the duties of the Christian life, and when they wished to treat of a virtue or a vice, it was thence they drew their most powerful motives for the practice of the one and the avoiding of the other. In the Sacred Scripture Bourdaloue finds his strongest arguments, Bossuet his most telling comparisons and his most lively images, Massillon the matter for his most beautiful and striking developments. In one word, it is an incontestable truth, that the Scripture has been the sacred mine whence the greatest writers and preachers whom the world has seen have derived their choicest matter. From the prophets they have drawn the feeling and the pathos, and from the historical books, the edifying histories which grace their discourses. In the Psalms they have discovered the most lively and affecting sentiments of piety, in the Book of Wisdom the wisest rules of morality and conduct, and in the Gospels the holiest precepts and counsels of perfection. To the same source must the young preacher also go to seek his purest inspirations and his loftiest ideas. He must study the Scripture from beginning to end, as St. Augustine advises; *Totas legerit notasque habuerit, etsi non intellectu, tamen lectione,** so that he may not miss a single vein of this priceless and inexhaustible mine. He must study it with a profoundly religious sentiment, as befits the Word of God, with such a lively faith as will engrave its most striking passages indelibly on his mind. He must endeavour to render its language familiar to himself, to employ its expressions and turns of thought as much as possible, and above all, to make it the matter of his meditation, as he will

* De Doc. Christ. lib. ii. 8.

make the grace to understand and to appreciate its meaning the subject of his frequent prayer. By meditation and prayer he will become filled with the spirit of these Sacred Writings. God will speak to him as he did to Ezechiel of old, *Comede volumen istud, et vadens loquere filiis Israel.** Applying to himself the beautiful commentary of St. Jerome on this text, "Devour this holy book by assiduous study, digest it by deep meditation, cause it to become part of your very substance, before you presume to preach to my people"—he will go forth, strong in the power of God's word, to carry the glad tidings of salvation to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Then shall his feet be beautiful as the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things. Then shall his sound go forth into all the earth, and his words unto the ends of the whole world. Then shall his preaching be blessed indeed, causing men to call upon the name of the Lord, and causing them to be saved. Then, indeed, as men listen to him shall they recognize in him a true minister of God, a true ambassador of Christ, and confessing with their mouths the Lord Jesus and believing in their hearts, they shall be saved. Then, indeed, going forth in the name, and as the chosen minister of God, with the words of his commission ever ready on his lips, ever welling up from the abundance of his heart, he shall produce much fruit—a fruit that shall remain unto everlasting life, a fruit that shall cause him, who has instructed others unto justice, to shine like a star in the firmament of God for all eternity.

After the study of Holy Scripture and the Fathers, the young preacher must find the most copious and most appropriate matter for his amplification in theology, scholastic and ascetic. An exact knowledge of scholastic theology is essential to every preacher. Proclaiming the truth to men in the name of God, not only must he not err, but he must

* Ezechl. iii. 1.

be quite certain that he does not err, and that he exposes the truths of the Gospel in all their purity. Without an exact knowledge of theology he will err, or, at all events, be uncertain in his teaching. In dogma, he will confound what is of faith with what is not. He will be neither exact in his exposition of doctrine, nor solid in his proofs, and hence he will lead his flock into error, or disturb their faith. In morals, he will confound counsels with precepts; that which is of perfection with that which is of obligation; that which under certain circumstances may be tolerated, with that which *semper et pro semper* must be rigorously forbidden; and thus he will, through his laxity or his undue severity, give his people false consciences, and be the cause of innumerable sins in them.

Not less essential to the preacher is a ready and practical knowledge of ascetic theology, or, the science of sanctity. It is the duty of the pastor of souls to draw his people from sin and to form them to virtue; to give strength to the feeble, and to assist the just to run on with giant strides in the way of holy perfection. In order to do this he must know the rules by which souls are governed, by which they break off from sinful habits, are fashioned to virtue, and gradually elevated to the highest perfection. He must have an intimate knowledge of those conditions which elevate ordinary actions to the supernatural order; and he must be prepared to point out the road by which all, no matter what their state or condition of life, may reach the mountain of perfection. Now, all this supposes a very intimate knowledge of the spiritual life and of the principles by which it is directed. This necessary and all-essential knowledge can only be acquired by the practice of constant meditation, and the diligent study of such works as treat of this matter. Foremost amongst these works are the admirable Treatise of Rodriguez on the Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection, the Knowledge and Love of Jesus Christ by Pere

Saint-Jure, the Love of God by Saint Francis de Sales, the Imitation of Christ, the Spiritual Combat, the True Spouse of Christ (for religious persons especially) by St. Alphonsus, the Catechism of the Council of Trent, etc., etc. With the practical and expedite knowledge which he will acquire from the studious, careful, and daily reading, so far as circumstances may permit, of these or similar works; from his own pious meditations, and his own growing experience as he advances in the ministry, the pastor of souls will never be at a loss either for solid and effective matter for his sermons, or true, definite, and solid principles by which to guide his flock in the way of salvation.

As the *loci communes* of preaching assist the sacred orator to establish and develop his propositions by the aid of Scripture, Tradition, and those other sources which are, in a rhetorical sense, "Extrinsic" to the subject itself, so the *loci communes* of rhetoric also help to conduct the preacher to his end, by enabling him to develop and illustrate that subject by considerations drawn from its very nature, and from those qualities which belong "Intrinsically" to it.

The *loci communes* of rhetoric, or, in other words, "Intrinsic Topics" or "Proofs from Reason," may be reduced to Genus and Species, Definition, Enumeration of Parts, Contraries, Circumstances, Cause and Effect, Comparisons, including Examples and Parables. Although these "Topics" are the foundation of all arguments drawn from reason, and are the fertile sources of powerful and varied amplification, we shall, inasmuch as the study of them pertains to Rhetoric strictly so called, content ourselves in this place with briefly glancing at them; treating, however, at a little more length, of Comparisons, Examples, and Parables, since they are of the most importance to the preacher, and since they are to be considered under a point of view which is to a certain extent peculiar to themselves.

Genus and *Species* are correlative ideas, one of which

cannot be understood without the other. The preacher employs this "Topic" as the foundation of an argument by considering what his subject possesses in common with other subjects, and what it has which is peculiar to itself—*ex. g.:* Does not every virtue (*genus*) merit our admiration? How is it, then, that we make so little account of Christian watchfulness (*species*) which can alone secure youth against the dangers of temptation?

Definition supplies us with the foundation of argument by enabling us to explain the nature of any object through the development of its essential qualities. Definition is of the greatest utility, as well in enabling us to give the clearest idea of an object, as in furnishing us with matter for amplification. The philosophical definition confines itself to the words which are strictly necessary, whilst the oratorical definition developes and explains the nature of the object in a striking and pleasing manner—*ex. g.:* The philosopher would content himself with describing scandal, as "any unbecoming word or deed affording to another the occasion of spiritual ruin;" whilst the orator would not merely describe the absolute *nature* of the offence, but the *punishment* due for it, and the *reparation* which it requires, thus obtaining most probably not only the introduction to, but the points of, his discourse.

Enumeration of Parts consists in running through and detailing the various parts of which an object is composed, in order to fix the attention upon those particulars which are best adapted to establish or to prove any truth. It differs from the definition in this that it enters more into details—*ex. g.:* Massillon, wishing to prove that there are comparatively few Christians who merit salvation through the innocence of their lives, runs through all the states, conditions, and occupations of men, and thence deduces his conclusion.

Contraries. The force of the argument which is drawn from this source consists in destroying the effect of one idea

by opposing to it the still greater weight of its contrary, and by showing that the two cannot exist at the same time, or in the same subject. Massillon, in his sermon on the small numbers of the elect, thus deduces an argument from this source: "You admit," says he, "that it is necessary to renounce the world, the flesh, the devil and his works; and, yet, I perceive in your whole life and conduct nothing but attachment to the world, to sensuality, and to the devil and his works."

By *Circumstances*, in this rhetorical point of view, we may consider the *place* in which any action occurred, the *persons* who were concerned in it with all those qualities which might distinguish them, together with all the *incidents* which *preceded*, *accompanied*, or *followed* it. These circumstances, which are embodied in the well-known verse, *Quis*, *quid*, *ubi*, *quibus auxiliis*, *cur*, *quomodo*, *quando*, may be employed with great propriety and vigour in the consideration of the Passion of Christ, and other kindred subjects.

Cause and *Effect.* Through the aid of this "Topic" the orator developes or demonstrates any truth or fact by an exposition of causes, primary or secondary, essential or accidental, and of effects which, naturally or essentially, flow from them. In his sermon on the certainty of a future state Massillon lays down his principle, "That all does not die with us," and then proceeds to establish it by a consideration of the ridiculous and impious consequences which necessarily flow from the doctrines of the unbeliever. He thus powerfully concludes the first portion of his argumentation:—

"If all die with us, domestic annals and the train of our ancestors are only a collection of chimeras; since we have no forefathers, and shall have no descendants, anxieties for a name and posterity are therefore ridiculous; the honours we render to the memory of illustrious men, a childish error, since it is absurd to honour what has no existence; the sacred respect we pay to the habitations of the dead, a vulgar

illusion; the ashes of our fathers and friends, a vile dust which we should cast to the winds as belonging to no person; the last wishes of the dying, so sacred amongst even the most barbarous nations, the last sound of a machine which crumbles in pieces; and, to comprise all in a word, if all die with us, the laws are then a foolish subjection; kings and rulers, phantoms whom the imbecility of the people has exalted; justice, an usurpation on the liberties of men; the law of marriage, a vain scruple; modesty, a prejudice; honour and probity, chimeras; incests, parricides, and the blackest villanies, pastimes of nature, and names which the policy of legislators has invented. . . . The uncertainty of the believer is then suspicious in its principle, foolish in its proofs, and horrible in its consequences."

Comparisons, when properly employed, are of the greatest advantage in amplifying and developing a discourse. They must be drawn from objects well known to our hearers, otherwise, as is evident, they will only add obscurity instead of clearness to it. The Holy Scripture is our best guide in this respect. It is full of comparisons which are taken from the most ordinary subjects, as the human body, the gnat, the ant, the dog which returns to his vomit, the tree, the sowing and the harvest, the vine, the shepherd, the husbandman, etc. In the employment of comparisons, although we may take them from lowly or familiar objects, we must never forget the dignity of the pulpit, or descend to language which may not be strictly just and becoming. We must not spin them out too much, or press them too far, since the axiom, *Omnis comparatio claudicat*, is strictly true. Employed with these limitations, and under these conditions, comparisons impart a wonderful clearness, reality, interest, and force to a discourse. They render it intelligible to the most simple and unlearned, full of interest and attraction to the more cultivated, and impart the clearest light to the subject which we treat. In a word, they bring it home to

the audience. Massillon employs comparisons, drawn from Scripture, with extraordinary felicity and grace. We subjoin several brief examples.

1. *On the Word of God.* "We may apply to the greater part of our hearers what Joseph addressed to his brethren when disguising himself from them. It is not to seek for corn and nourishment that you have come hither. You have come as spies to see the nakedness of the land. *Exploratores estis; ut videatis infirmiora terræ venistis.** It is not to nourish yourselves with the bread of the word that you have come to listen to us; it is that you may discover our failings and pass your censures upon them."

2. *On true worship.* "You resemble the altar of tabernacles of which Holy Scripture makes mention. It was covered with pure gold, the outside was brilliant to look upon, but the interior was empty: *Non erat solidum, sed intus vacuum,*† says the Spirit of God. In vain do you immolate those strange victims which the Lord does not seek. Your passions have never been immolated before the sanctity of God. You have but the exterior appearance of piety, interiorly you are void of faith and of works. *Intus vacuum.*" Bossuet is not less happy in his employment of comparisons, sometimes comparing the journey of the Christian to heaven to that of the Israelites traversing the desert to the promised land, sometimes comparing life to a road which terminates in heaven, etc.

Examples, when judiciously selected, are not less useful than comparisons. The most listless audience will brighten up when the preacher commences to illustrate his argument by examples; and, as they listen to him more willingly, so do they retain more easily the argument thus enforced. Massillon thus beautifully enforces the obligation of fasting by examples: "God does not measure your infirmities by your titles, but by his law. David was a prince whom the delicacies

* Genes. xlii. 9. † Exod. xxxviii. 9.

of royalty ought surely to have softened; read in his divine canticles, the history of his austerities. If you imagine that sex should give you any privilege, I will show you that Esther, in the midst of a proud court, knew how to afflict her soul by fasting. Judith, so distinguished amongst the children of Israel, bewailed the death of her spouse in fasting and sackcloth. The Paulas—the Marcellas—those illustrious Roman matrons, sprung from the rulers of the world—Oh! what examples of austerity have they not left to succeeding generations?"

The *Parable* is a comparison which we disguise under the form of a historical fiction in order to add greater clearness and life to our subject. It has the same effect as the example. It interests and reanimates the flagging attention of our hearers, by bringing the truth which we wish to inculcate in the most vivid manner before them. It has a peculiar charm for children and simple persons, and is most useful in helping them to understand definitions which they frequently find it difficult to comprehend. The use of the parable comes to us consecrated by the example of our divine Lord, who often employed it when preaching to the lowly and the ignorant; and it may well be doubted, whether the most finished efforts of human genius and oratory have ever produced such deep and lasting effects in souls, as those which have been wrought by the simple recital of the divine parables of the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep, etc.

By the diligent and assiduous working of these *loci*, above all by their practical application to the peculiar intelligence, position, and necessities of his flock, it is impossible that the preacher can ever be at a loss for abundant matter with which, not only to convince, but to please and to move his flock. *Veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat.*

SECTION VII.

REFUTATION.

Before leaving this branch of our subject we must briefly glance at another matter which is essentially connected with it, and which is technically known as Refutation. Frequently it is not sufficient to prove our point solidly and well. We must, especially when there is question of morality, pursue the sinner further still, in order to overthrow those objections and vain pretexts behind which he strives to shelter himself, and which he interposes between himself and the discharge of his duty. The most effective way of doing this is for the preacher to enter, as it were, into a dialogue with the sinner, and, addressing him without bitterness or anything which can give offence, to take up his objections and show their unreasonableness and worthlessness. This manner of refuting, when it is conducted with tact and discernment, is not only full of interest and attraction to an audience, but is extremely useful. Refutation is generally introduced at the close of the positive arguments, but it may be advanced earlier, when we deem it necessary thus to sweep away prejudices which threaten to interfere with the successful conduct of the body of the discourse. It may also be interlaced amongst the various proofs as they occur, if such a proceeding be deemed more judicious, and this of course can only be decided by the good sense and prudence of the preacher. The principal thing to be observed in this matter is, to be very discreet in the selection of the objections which we attack, and to attack none which we are not able to refute victoriously and unanswerably. These remarks apply, *a fortiori*, to the refutation of dogmatical objections when the preacher may deem it his duty to

bring them before his flock, or when the necessity of answering them may be thrust upon him from quarters which the interests of religion forbid him to pass by in silence. Unless in these exceptional cases, the less he disturbs the simple faith and the undoubting belief of his flock, by bringing before them objections of which perhaps they then hear for the first time, the better. If we advance objections without victoriously refuting them, we afford the sinner or unbeliever additional pretexts for remaining in his sin or unbelief.

Having once discreetly selected the objection which we intend to refute, it is well, as we have said, to put it into the mouth of our adversary, advancing it frankly and fairly, expressing it precisely as we believe it to be in the sinner's mind, so that, listening to our exposition of it, he may say to himself, "That is exactly my objection; that is precisely my difficulty, and I should wish very much to hear how the preacher will clear it up."

Having fairly stated the objection, there are of course various methods of refuting it. We will glance briefly at the leading ones, and give some illustrations from Massillon who excels in this matter. Many of these illustrations also afford excellent examples of the method of amplifying by comparison, etc., etc.

1. *We may refute an objection by showing the falseness of the principle on which it rests.* Massillon thus refutes the false principles that youth is the season for pleasure, that the practice of virtue belongs to old age:—

"Who has assured you that death will not surprise you in the midst of those years which you intend to devote to the world and your passions? Upon what foundation, I ask you, do you promise yourself that age shall change your heart, and incline you to embrace a new life? Did age change the heart of Solomon? No, it was then that his passions became most violent, that his miserable frailty

became most scandalous. Did age prepare Saul for his conversion? No, it was then that to his other errors he added superstition, impiety, hardness of heart, and despair It may be that, as you advance in years, you shall leave off certain loose manners, because the disgust which follows them shall have withdrawn you from them, but you will not on that account be converted. You may no longer live in debauchery, but you will not therefore repent. Your heart will not be changed, you will do no penance. You will still be worldly, ambitious, voluptuous and sensual. And, what is worst of all, you will live tranquil in this fearful state. When you are no longer able to give yourselves up to these vices you will have all the dispositions to do so. Years, bad examples, long habit of the world, shall have served merely to harden your conscience, to put indolence and worldly wisdom in the place of the passions, to obliterate that sense of religion which renders the soul fearful and timorous in the days of youth. You will die as you have lived. You will die impenitent. . . . . But, even supposing that this great misfortune should not fall upon you, tell me is not the Lord the God of all times and of all ages? There is not one of our days which does not belong to him, which we are free to consecrate to the world and to vanity. Is he not justly jealous of the first fruits of our heart and of our life, which he has figured by those first fruits of the earth which he commanded to be offered to him? Why, then, do you seek to rob him of the fairest portions of your years, that you may consecrate them to Satan and his works? Is your life too long to be wholly devoted to the glory of the Lord who has bestowed it upon you, and who has promised you an eternal one? Is your youth so precious that it may not be consecrated to the Supreme Being, and rendered worthy of its eternal inheritance? Are you to reserve for him only the remains of your life, and the dregs of your passions. If you act thus it will

be as if you said to him, 'Lord, so long as I shall be fit for the world and its passions think not that I shall turn towards thee, or that I shall seek thee. So long as the world shall be pleased with me, I will devote myself to it. When it begins to neglect and forsake me, then, I will turn towards thee, then I will say to thee, Lo, I am here! I pray thee accept that heart which the world hath rejected, that heart which finds itself under the necessity of reluctantly bestowing itself upon thee, that heart from which even now thou mayst expect nothing but perfect indifference and utter neglect.' Ah! unworthy soul, who thus treatest God with such mockery and insult, dost thou believe that, in thy necessity, he will deign to accept the homage that is thus forced upon him, the homage that is as disgraceful to his glory as it is hateful in his sight!"

After this powerful refutation of these false principles Massillon confirms what he has said, and renders it still more sensible, by the following beautiful comparison.

"In ancient days the prophet Isaiah thus mocked those who worshipped vain idols. You take, said he to them, a cedar from Lebanon: you devote the best and most handsome portions of it to your necessities, your pleasures, your luxury, and the embellishment of your palaces; and when you have no other use for the remnant, you carve it into a vain idol and offer up to it ridiculous vows and homages.* And I, in my turn, may say to you, you consecrate the fairest and most flourishing years of your life to the gratification of your fancies and your iniquitous passions; and when you know not what to do with the remainder, when it becomes useless to the world and to your pleasures, then, you make an idol of it. You make it serve you for religion. You form to yourself of it a false, a superficial, an inanimate virtue, and to this miserable idol you reluctantly consecrate the wretched remains of your passions and of your debaucheries:

* Isai. xliv. 19.

Et de reliquo ejus, idolum faciam. Behold, brethren, what I, in my turn may say to you." *

2. Sometimes the sinner advances his objection under the form of a principle which has a two-fold meaning, one true and one false. *We refute it by exposing this false meaning.* Massillon thus exposes the sophism that sin is expiated by the mere performance of works of mercy.

"Works of mercy aid us to expiate those crimes of which we *repent*, but they do not excuse or justify those sins which we continue to love. Charity is the handmaid of penance, but she is not the apologist of luxury. What is most deplorable in this matter is, that when the movements of grace begin to fill our consciences with terror, we clothe the naked and feed the hungry with whom we happen to meet, and thus calm and bring false peace to these salutary stings. These are the signs of peace with which we soothe our alarms. This is the false and deceptive rainbow of which the Prophet speaks, *arcus dolosus*, which, in the midst of those clouds and those salutary tempests which God had begun to excite in our hearts, diverts our mind from the image of danger. We are lulled to sleep upon these sad ruins of religion, as if they could preserve us from shipwreck; and those very works of charity which ought to be the price of our salvation become the occasion of our eternal ruin."

3. We may refute, *by denying at once the principle and the conclusion on which the sinner rests.* Massillon proceeds in this manner in refuting the objection, that it is necessary to distinguish between those who are of the world and those who are not; and, that as we are of the world, we may reasonably dispense ourselves from that strict code of morality which is sought to be imposed upon us.

Refutation of the principle.—"And do you mean to tell me that there is to be one Gospel for you and another for

* Sermon on the Delay of Conversion.

those who dwell in the desert? You are of the world? Aye, and so was the sinful woman mentioned in the Gospel, but I never heard that she was therefore dispensed from doing penance. David was of the world, but I have never heard that he made this an excuse for moderating the severity of his self-chastisement. I have never heard that the first Christians were accustomed to distinguish between those who were of the world and those who were not. To say that you are a Christian is the same as to say that you are not of the world. . . . You are of the world, my brethren? Yes, but it is your crime, and you will make it your excuse. A Christian belongs no longer to the world, he is a citizen of heaven.

Refutation of the consequence.—"When you affirm that you are of the world what do you pretend to say? That you are dispensed from doing penance? You speak justly if it be true that the world is the abode of innocence, the sanctuary of virtue, the faithful protector of modesty, of sanctity, and of temperance. That prayer is not necessary for you? I agree with you if you can assure me that there is less danger in the world than in solitude, that there are fewer snares to be feared, that seductions are less frequent, that relapses are more rare, and that less grace is needed in order to rise again. That you are not bound to withdraw from the amusements of the world? Again, I agree with you if it be true that its amusements are holy, and its companies innocent, if all that you hear and see in it elevate your heart to God, nourish your faith, cultivate your piety, and draw down the divine grace upon you. That you are not bound to take such pains in order to save your souls? You say what is true, and yet once more will I agree with you, if you will show me that you have no passions to overcome, no obstacles to surmount; that the world will assist you to fulfil those sacred obligations which the Gospel has imposed upon you. O man! such is your terrible blindness, you reckon

your very miseries as your highest privileges; you persuade yourself that in multiplying your chains you are but increasing your liberty; you are making your very dangers the rock on which you are building your false and delusive hopes.*

4. *The most brilliant and most telling mode of refuting is that in which, collecting a number of objections into one bundle, so to speak, we, without delaying upon any of them, snap them in twain one after another by strong, brief, and cutting answers.* These brief, but brilliant strokes of a nervous and vigorous eloquence, are as darts discharged into the very heart of our adversary, which, raining down upon him from every side, leave him no means of evasion, no chance of escape. Massillon is especially happy in this method of refutation:

1*st Example, proving that the virtues of the good will leave the wicked without any excuse.*

"What will you answer before the tribunal of Jesus Christ? Will you affirm that you have but followed established usages? Did the just who are standing in your presence conform themselves to these usages? Will you excuse yourselves on the ground of your illustrious birth? You have known many who, with a more illustrious name than yours, have sanctified their state, and have discovered in it the happy secret of securing their salvation. Perchance, you will allege the vivacity of youth, or the delicacy of sex? You may every day behold those who regard these things as mere dirt, who have no thought but for heaven. Will you speak of the dissipating nature of your occupations? How many have you seen who, engaged in the same occupations, have nevertheless saved their souls. Your taste for pleasure? The desire of pleasure reigns in the hearts of all men, and frequently it is strongest in those who serve God most faithfully. Your afflictions? There are many who are more miserable. Your prosperity? There are many who sanctify

* Sermon upon the Samaritan woman.

themselves in abundance. Your health? You may behold many who, fortified by divine love and grace, serve God with the greatest fidelity, although suffering from the most infirm health.*

2nd Example, proving that the discourses of the world ought not to turn us away from the service of God.

"What can the world say of you which ought to give you such alarm? That you are changed? O happy inconstancy, which detaches you from a world which is always fleeting and inconstant, in order to attach you to those unchangeable goods which no man can take from you. That you are foolish to renounce pleasure at your age? O holy folly, wiser than all the wisdom of the world, since in renouncing its pleasures you renounce nothing, and in finding God you find everything. That you know not what you are doing? Thrice useful reproaches, which thus become pregnant with instruction, and serve to animate your vigilance. That you only leave the world because it has first left you? Precious injustice, which thus hinders you from receiving a vain recompense here. That you affect a singularity of life which will cover you with the ridicule of the world? O consoling censure, which declares that you are following in the footsteps of the saints who were ever covered with the vain ridicule of the world. In fine, that since your change you are no longer good for anything? My God, and are we useless upon the face of the earth because we serve you, love you, and discharge our duties; because we edify, assist, console, and pray for our brethren."†

Such are some of the principal methods of refuting the vain pretexts and the futile objections of the sinner. It only remains after this overthrow of his forces—this destruction of the ramparts behind which he seeks to hide himself from God and his duty, to raise him up again, to show him what

* Sermon upon the judgment of the good and the wicked.

† Sermon upon human respect.

he is bound to do in order to save his soul, and to encourage him to undertake this duty like a fervent and determined Christian.

SECTION VIII.

SPECIAL APPLICATION OF THE SUBJECT TO ALL CLASSES OF OUR HEARERS; OR, AMPLIFICATION OF ARGUMENTS DRAWN FROM PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS *in re morali*.—EXTREMES TO BE AVOIDED.

HAVING sufficiently explained the great Christian truth which forms the subject of our discourse; having supported it by arguments discreetly chosen, skilfully arranged, and powerfully amplified; having, when necessary, refuted the objections which may be advanced against it; it only remains to deduce those practical conclusions which necessarily flow from it, and apply them to the special wants and necessities of our hearers, since we only preach that they may become better men. In order to do this successfully we must know our people well; we must embrace within the scope of our sermon, as far as is practicable, the necessities of *all* those who are listening to us; and we must apply ourselves with special earnestness and care to combat the dominant passions and the leading abuses and disorders which may reign in our parish. In order to be able to apply our discourse with practical fruit to the souls of our hearers, it is evident that we must first know them well. If we happen to be preaching in a strange place, we must endeavour to acquire this necessary information from the pastor of it. In our own parish we shall, of course, acquire an intimate knowledge of our flock, of their virtues as well as of their failings, from our intercourse with them, from our observation of their lives and habits, and from those other sources which experience in the work of the ministry will daily open to us. Without

such a knowledge of our flock it is certain that, whatever other qualities it may possess, a sermon can never be practical. We must labour to embrace, as far as possible, within the scope of our discourse the necessities of all our hearers. If a preacher merely apply his healing remedies to one class of his audience, his discourse will necessarily be without either utility or interest to the rest, whilst all have an equal right to be nourished with the Divine word. His flock are like the sick men watching at the pool of Bethsaida. He is the angel sent by God to cure them. He is to give light to the blind, and strength and vigour to the lame. He is to raise up those who have fallen, and he is to make sure the feet of those who are yet standing. His charity must therefore spread itself out to the wants of all; to those who sin through weakness or ignorance; to those who are involved in evil habits but who are not as yet thoroughly hardened; to those who have steeped themselves in sin till their eyes are blinded and their ears closed to all the lights and inspirations of the Almighty; those who in sad sober truth are living in the very state of damnation without one thought or one desire of freeing themselves from their chains. With no less earnestness will his charity embrace those who are walking with loving care and fidelity in the way of God's Commandments, those who may have but just begun, those who may have made some progress, those who may have already advanced a great distance on the path of holy perfection. In order to meet these various wants the preacher will, if he be treating of any vice, attack with all the power at his command those sins which are the sad children of this fruitful mother. He will speak with compassion of those who fall through weakness or the force of temptation. He will raise his voice in solemn warning against the perversity of those who are hardening their hearts and blinding their eyes by their indulgence of evil habits. He will thunder God's judgments, *cum omni imperio*, into the soul of the

reprobate and hardened sinner, that, if he will not allow himself to be converted to God by the pleadings of His mercy, he may at least be brought to a sense of his duty by the recollection of those fearful punishments which He has prepared for His unrepenting enemies. The preacher will not fail either to speak with reprobation of those lighter failings, those minor sins, by the commission of which man is led on, little by little, to put himself in open enmity with God. In fine, he will prescribe the practical means of avoiding or of correcting this vice, indicating successively those which are of necessity and those which are only of counsel and of perfection.

If, on the contrary, he be treating of some particular virtue, he will endeavour to inspire his hearers with a great horror of the sins which are contrary to it, and he will propose the ordinary as well as the highest degrees in which it may be practised. In this way he will minister to the wants of all. All classes of sinners, as well as of the just, will receive that instruction which is most suited to them, and there will be no one present who may not derive some profit from the discourse. With a view to the profit of all those who may compose his audience, no matter what their state of life may be, he will not fail frequently to impress upon them the general principle that, of all duties, those which pertain to our own peculiar state are the most essential, and that the ordinary means of perfection and sanctification are placed in the faithful and perfect discharge of those duties. He will render this still more practical by examples, by dwelling upon the obligations of the rich and the poor, of masters and of servants, of parents and of children, etc. etc; taking care, however, not to decry any profession which is honourable in itself, nor to dwell upon the obligations of any state to which correlative duties may be attached, without insisting equally upon the faithful discharge of those duties.

As a necessary consequence of labouring to adapt his

discourse to the special wants of his hearers, the preacher will apply himself most assiduously to combat those dominant passions and those leading disorders which may reign in his parish. These dominant vices are the grand obstacles to salvation. These are the evils which cry aloud most urgently for remedy, and which, unless they be removed, will be the most fruitful source of death to many souls. Whilst, however, the fervent pastor will inveigh with all the powers of his soul, in season and out of season, *in omni patientia et doctrina*, against these dominant vices, he will be careful never to assume a tone of bitter acerbity and angry reproach. True zeal knows no such language as this. It is sweet and without gall, tender and compassionate towards the sinner who has fallen. No man is ever gained to God by angry reproach, that is, by a reproach clothed in angry words. At the best, a reproach is always a bitter medicine. It is sometimes necessary to administer it to the sinner, but let the preacher ever temper its bitterness by the considerate and gentle language in which he will clothe it. Let him, to use a common simile, *gild the pill*, mindful of the characteristic which Holy Writ applies to true zeal against sin, *Irascimini et nolite peccare.** He will also be careful not to represent any disorders which may prevail in his parish as really worse than they are. Exaggeration is always mischievous and always to be avoided. It is doubly mischievous when employed in the pulpit. He will use an extreme caution and reserve when speaking of certain vices, so as to say nothing which may in the least sully the most sensitive or the most delicate conscience. Whilst he denounces the vices of his people, he will not fail at the same time to indicate the remedies for these disorders. Remedies, it is scarcely necessary to remark, are of two kinds, general and particular. By general remedies we understand prayer, meditation, the holy use of the sacraments, spiritual reading, fasting,

* Psl. iv. 5.

mortification, and alms-deeds. Particular remedies vary according to the faults and dispositions of the sinner, and they ought to be pointed out by the preacher with such exact precision that all may see quite clearly what they ought to do. As he has shown them in detail what they are, so the preacher ought to show them in detail what they ought to be, the practices and the means by which they may correct themselves, the obligations which they have to fulfil, and the new life on which they are bound to enter. The experience and the watchful care of the zealous pastor will furnish him with more practical and efficacious means of accomplishing these great, useful, and holy ends, than any we could hope to suggest or prescribe. Let him only be in earnest, let him only be inflamed with a great zeal for the glory of God and for the salvation of the precious souls whom his Master has entrusted to his care to be prepared for heaven, and the means —sweet, plentiful, and efficacious, of accomplishing his purpose, will never be wanting to him. Let him not fail, too, to impress upon his people that the only way of avoiding sin is by sedulously avoiding its occasions, that the sole means of persevering in good resolutions is through the grace of God which is alone showered down in plentiful profusion upon the souls of those who ask it in fervent, humble, and continual prayer.

To sum up, then, and briefly recapitulate the leading principles which have been thrown out in considering this part of our matter. Having selected his subject in view of the special dispositions, capacity, and necessities of his audience; having collected his materials and arranged them in such a way as to secure the essential quality of unity for his discourse; having, in his Exordium, introduced that subject in a becoming manner, and, by means of his Division, marked out its leading members or parts; the preacher

proceeds to establish the great truth which he has laid down as the basis of his sermon. In the first place, he imparts to his audience that amount of clear, solid, and practical instruction on the matter in hand which his experience points out to him as necessary or useful for them. He then proceeds to confirm his propositions by solid proofs. He may prove each point of his discourse from Holy Scripture, the Holy Fathers, the Motives of Faith, and from reason. He may amplify each source of proof in the manner described, and, more especially, by the use of Comparisons, Examples, etc., drawn either from Sacred or Profane History, or the ordinary circumstances of life. When necessary or useful, he will refute the objections which may be advanced against either his proposition or his proofs; and, finally, since the whole aim and object of his preaching is to render his hearers better men, he will make a practical application of the subject to their special necessities and wants. This application may be either reserved until the conclusion of the argumentation, or it may be introduced at the close of each point of the discourse, or it may even be brought forward at any part of the instructive or argumentative portions of his sermon where the preacher deems it peculiarly appropriate or telling. The plan of introducing it during the progress of his discourse, at least at the conclusion of each point, is probably better as an ordinary rule, than that of reserving it until the conclusion of the entire argumentation, since the preacher thus renders his sermon more practically interesting and useful.

By the careful, diligent, and practical application of these principles, the preacher can scarcely fail to secure a becoming and effective development of, what we may call, the logical element of his discourse: *Veritas pateat.*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PATHETIC PART. PERSUASION—APPEAL TO THE PASSIONS. PERORATION.

SECTION I.

PERSUASION—ITS NATURE AND NECESSITY.

AVING studied—if not thoroughly, at least sufficiently—the manner of introducing our subject, the method of instructing, and the rules according to which our argumentation is to be conducted, strengthened, and adorned, it now remains to turn our attention to the Peroration, or, Conclusion of a Sermon. Before doing so, however, we must, as briefly as the matter will permit, consider and lay down some general principles on what is, beyond all doubt, the most important portion of our subject, and that which will have the greatest and most direct influence upon the preacher's success. We mean the pathetic part of the discourse, or, what is technically called, the art of persuasion, through an appeal to the passions of our hearers. We beg the young preacher's careful attention whilst we endeavour, as concisely as possible, to explain the essential and most important part which persuasion, or, the art of influencing the will, holds in every true and successful sermon.

Up to this point our explanations have been principally directed to show the preacher how he is to explain and to

prove the Christian doctrine; in other words, how he is to enlighten the understanding, bring truth before the intellect, and *convince* his hearers. But, as a sermon is of its nature a persuasive oration, and as its ultimate object is, not to discuss some abstract point or some metaphysical truth, not to *convince* our hearers that they are bound to become better men, but to *persuade* them to do so, it is clear that our work is only partly done when we have treated of instruction and argumentation. It is one thing to convince a man that he ought to change his life; it is another to persuade him to make this change. This latter, this persuasion, is the ultimate aim of all preaching, the end which the preacher necessarily proposes to himself. All his instruction, all his argumentation, all his previous efforts, are simply intended to lay the foundation on which to build persuasion. It is well, it is necessary, to triumph over the intellect by conviction, but what result has the Christian preacher really attained if he have not also moved the will, gained the heart, in one word, persuaded his hearers? There are few men who do not believe in the existence of hell, and yet how many are there who live as if they did not believe this truth. And what is the reason of this? Is it from want of instruction, or from defect of solid proof? Most certainly not. But it is because, although the intellect is convinced, the heart is not moved It is because there are many preachers who know how to prove the Christian doctrine and to convince the intellect, but comparatively few who know how to move the heart, and persuade men to practise what is preached. There are many who are able to point out to the sinner the road which he ought to take, few who are able efficaciously to persuade him to enter on it. Many preachers take great pains to instruct and to prove, in other words, to speak to the intellect of their hearers; but, unfortunately, it is not the intellect which is sick, but the heart which is the victim of evil passions, and the heart is not to be reached by cold

and logical reasoning. It must be touched, it must be moved, it must be persuaded to embrace and put in practice that truth which the intellect has presented to it. Through the influence, and by the aid of, those passions by which it is so deeply moved and governed, it must be gained to the side of virtue. The sinner must be brought not only to believe, but to practise. To attain this great end is the aim and object of persuasion, or, the art of moving the will, and persuasion is the only way of attaining it. There is naturally in the human heart but little taste for virtue, and we only efficaciously move our hearers to embrace it, when we speak to them in those warm and earnest tones which alone can act upon and influence the will. Hence it is that St. Francis of Sales declares that we have done but little in bringing conviction to the intellect, unless we also move the will; that we have gained but a very poor result if our audience depart from our sermon, convinced indeed that they ought to be virtuous, but without any intention of becoming so. A discourse which leaves our hearers cold and insensible, which does not move the most hidden depths of their souls, and inspire them with strong, fervid, and efficacious resolutions, may sparkle with gems of rhetoric, and be redolent of the beauties of composition; but, most assuredly, it will be neither a good nor a useful sermon, since it wants the essential condition laid down by St. Augustine, *Flectendus auditor, ut moveatur ad agendum. Ideo victoriæ est flectere, quia fieri potest, ut doceatur et delectetur, et non assentiatur. Quid autem illa duo proderunt, si desit hoc tertium?** And we have the testimony of St. Bernard to the same effect, *Audio libenter, qui non sibi plausum, sed mihi planctum moveat.*†

On the other hand, if a preacher succeed in moving his hearers, if he succeed in acting upon their hearts, all is gained. He is certain to please, since he who moves always

* De Doct. Christ. lib. iv., cap. 12. † Serm. 9 in Cant.

pleases, and the more he succeeds in moving the more will he please. His arguments will produce their full effect, for the intellect will no longer seek to withold its assent from the truth when the heart has been already gained, and thus the victory is assured. The strength, then, of the Christian orator lies much more in the power of moving, than in reasoning. Since evil passions have their stronghold in the heart, it is by gaining their hearts that he influences and turns men to his purpose, rather than by convincing their intellect, although this too is necessary. Hence, the great and wonderful effects produced by some sermons, which, although in no wise remarkable for composition, are delivered with that unction, that real earnestness, that burning zeal, which, springing from a heart that is all on fire with a desire for God's glory and the honour of His holy name, acts with such irresistible force on the souls of men. Feeling is the soul of eloquence, and it is pathos, the expression of that feeling, which is the moving power of the sinner's conversion, of those restitutions, those reconciliations, and those other triumphs over the unregenerate heart of man which we are allowed to win, by God's permission and to the glory of His holy name, through the ministry of the pulpit. It is through this pathos of thought, of word, and of expression, that we gain our noblest victories over the hearts of our hearers, and lead them whither we will. It is in this that the main secret of our success is placed. The discourse which does not apply itself to the heart, which does not move and gain it, is necessarily void of the greatest and most noble results which should attend it. Moreover, although Christianity is a religion of reason, it is still more a religion of love and of sentiment; and, hence, that unction which springs from the heart of him who speaks, and which goes straight to the heart of him who is addressed, ought surely to be the essential characteristic, the very soul, of Christian eloquence. How can the Christian preacher proclaim the

great truths of which he is the guardian, *ad salvandos homines*, coldly and without feeling? When he does so he forgets what is due to God whose cause he pleads, and whose glory he defends; what is due to his brethren, whose dearest interests, for time and eternity, are at stake; what is due to himself, because the truths which he preaches regard himself equally with his hearers, since, if they be lost through any fault of his, he must render an account to God for their immortal souls. What greater contradiction can be conceived, what sight more strange and unaccountable, than that of a Christian preacher who can speak of the most tremendous judgments of God without one tone of feeling in his voice, without one sign of emotion on his countenance, as calmly and as coldly as if he did not believe them, as if he were merely treating some abstract metaphysical truth, instead of one which is practical beyond conception, one whose certainty is above all argument, one which is more nearly and more intimately connected with his own eternal interests and those of his hearers, than his soul is connected with his body! If all the masters of profane rhetoric insist upon the pathetic as the most essential part of a discourse, how much more true must this be where there is question of Christian preaching, when the orator very frequently has to carry his point against all the influences of corrupt nature, of an intellect blinded by passion, and a heart hardened by sin. A man may be a great philosopher without the faculty of persuading and of influencing the will. He may be an accomplished lecturer, although he may not know how to strike one chord of the human heart, or touch one string of the human soul. But, if it be true that persuasion is the ultimate end of all our preaching, if it be true that a sermon is essentially a persuasive oration, then, it follows, that unless he possess this great faculty, whatever else a man may be, he will never be a preacher. To move is the special gift of the apostle and the man of God: *Veritas moveat.*

SECTION II.

APPEAL TO THE PASSIONS.

If, then, persuasion be the end of every sermon, and if the pathetic, or the faculty of moving, hold such a leading position in its composition, it becomes both interesting and useful to investigate how this end is to be obtained, and how those movements which produce it are to be directed. Let us recur to our definition. Persuasion, as we have defined it, is the art of influencing the will, by appealing to the passions. Always supposing a due foundation of clear instruction and solid proof, persuasion, therefore, is the fruit of a successful appeal to, and moving of, the passions of the human heart. The passions are those affections or movements of the soul which are awakened at the sight of some object, real or imaginary, and by which the will is drawn to embrace that which is, or which it believes to be a good, and to fly from that which it deems to be an evil. The passions were implanted in the soul, to aid man in the attainment of that good which is consonant to his nature, and the avoiding of that evil which is prejudicial to him. It is unnecessary to prove that the passions in themselves are good, since they were given to man by his Creator. It is only in their abuse and perversion that they become evil. Neither is it necessary to devote time or space to the refutation of the absurd difficulty which is sometimes raised, viz., that appeals to the passions are an unfair mode of influencing our hearers; since it is at once evident that there can be no persuasion without such an appeal. *Truth* is the object of the intellect, *good* that of the will. Man never places an act except for the attainment of something which really is, or, which he, *hic et nunc*, rightly or wrongly, conceives to be a good; something which will conduce to his happiness, true or false; to the perfection of

his nature, and the development of his being. To make me *believe*, it is enough to show me the truth. To make me *act*, you must show me that the action will answer some end. Now, nothing can be an end to me which does not gratify some passion or affection in my nature; and, therefore, in order to induce me to attain that end, you must necessarily appeal to the passion or affection which is to be gratified by its attainment. You tell me that such a thing is for my honour, and thus you appeal to my pride; or, that it is for my interest, thus appealing to my self-love, and so of the rest.* Hence, so far from an appeal to the passions being an unfair method of persuasion, it is evident that there is no persuasion without it. Since, then, the heart of man is only efficaciously moved by appealing to those passions by which it is governed, it follows that the preacher who disdains to call them to his aid neglects one of his most powerful means of success. If man had not revolted against his Creator there would be no need to appeal to his passions, since they would, instinctively and of their own accord, tend to that real good which is their natural object; but, inasmuch as man has perverted the passions which are good in themselves, and as these passions are the source of all sin and of all rebellion against God, it follows that he, *omnibus pensatis*, is the best preacher who best knows how, not only directly to influence and act upon those pure and well-ordered affections or passions which may exist in the hearts of his hearers, but also to oppose to the evil passions which lead man from his end, those contrary impulses and affections by which alone he can be led back again into the path of religion and duty. *Affectus pravi*, says Louis of Grenada, *velut clavus clavo, contrariis affectibus pellendi sunt.*

Persuasion has this advantage over simple conviction, writes Fenelon, that it not only enables us to see the truth, but paints that truth in pleasing colours, and moves men efficaciously in

* Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric.

its favour. Thus, true eloquence consists in employing not only solid argument, but the means of interesting our hearer, and of awaking the strongest passions of his soul in our favour. It inspires him with indignation against ingratitude, with horror against cruelty. It fills him with compassion for misery, and awakens in his heart a true love for virtue, and so of the other affections. Hence, according to the judgment of St. Francis of Sales, St. Alphonsus Liguori, Louis of Grenada, and many other eminent writers, a preacher is eloquent in proportion as he is able to move the passions, and thus influence the wills of his hearers; in proportion as he knows how to oppose one passion to another, to eradicate the disorderly affections which reign in the heart by exciting acts of the contrary virtue. The perfection of art, according to Bellefroid, consists in leading man back to virtue through the agency of that very passion by the abuse of which he has been seduced and led astray. For example, you know that it is shame which so often closes the mouth of the sinner in the sacred tribunal. You oppose shame to shame. You place before his eyes the last judgment with all its terrors and you show him how awful and how irreparable is the ignominy which awaits him at that dread hour, unless he overcome the false shame which now renders him unfaithful to his duty. Again, you awaken in the hearts of those who are kept from their duty through fear of men, a much greater and more legitimate fear—viz., that of being disowned by Jesus Christ before the throne of His Father, even as they, through human respect, have disowned Him before men.

Having thus established the general necessity of the appeal to the passions in order to persuade, it may not be out of place to enquire somewhat more precisely into the nature of this appeal, and the manner in which it is to be conducted. And, firstly, we may remark that the appeal to the passions is sometimes *direct*, but that, more frequently, it is *indirect*.

It is said to be *direct* when the preacher, by the mere force of his own vehement passion, that passion which finds expression in his burning words, in his flashing eye, in his quivering voice, in his earnest gesture, acts *immediately* and *directly* upon the hearts of his hearers, and inspires them with those same sentiments and feelings with which he himself is so deeply penetrated, and which he expresses with such power and strength. Thus a preacher who, thoroughly moved and excited himself, should, at the conclusion of a discourse on mortal sin, give utterance to a warm and ardent act of contrition, would act directly upon his hearers, and infallibly excite the same sentiments of sorrow in their souls. This *direct* action of the preacher upon the soul of his hearer is the same whether it be the result of those stronger passions which are technically known as the *vehement pathetic*, or of those more gentle and tender emotions which the ancients named *affectus mites*, *lenes*, *compositi*, and which we are wont to designate, *unction*. As it has its source in that deep and burning feeling or passion of the preacher which merely struggles to find some inadequate expression in his broken words, it is plain that it is governed by no merely technical rules or restraints. That same feeling which inspires it will regulate its utterances. Although, most probably, we have all felt at one time or another this direct action of some holy and zealous preacher upon our souls, it is hard to describe it, or to say in what it consists. It is the mysterious and sympathetic action of one heart, truly and deeply moved, upon the heart of another, which is thus influenced and governed by it. It is the fruit of true and genuine feeling alone, and that same feeling which inspires it will ever restrain it within due bounds, prevent it from running to excess, or assuming any proportion that is extravagant or misplaced. No man has such a keen perception of what is becoming as the man of exquisite sensibility and of deep feeling; and hence, whilst we venture to assert

that this power of acting upon the souls of our fellow-men, and of inspiring them with those ardent sentiments and emotions with which we ourselves are animated, is one of the most precious gifts which a preacher can possess, we can lay down no technical rules by which he may attain it. We can only exhort and persuade him to foster and cultivate that sensibility of soul which instinctively appreciates whatever is true, beautiful, and sublime; to remember that he has been made only a little lower than the angels, and that the more pure and the more detached he becomes from the things of the world, the more closely he will approach in his resemblance to these pure spirits; to be above all things a man of prayer, a man of such intimate union with God as to be able, in the midst of all his distracting occupations, to look continually upon his Master's face; a man who, having been called by God to be an apostle, will never lose sight, either of his glorious prerogatives or his terrible responsibilities, but with that zeal for God's glory with which the true apostle is eaten up, and that charity for his brethren with which, like St. Paul, he will even ask to become anathema for them, will ever labour to be about his Father's business, will ever burn with the desire of doing that business more truly, more earnestly, and more efficaciously. Let the student foster to the utmost those precious qualities, whether of nature or of grace, which he may have received, sensibility of soul, depth of feeling, great love of God, and zeal for the glory of His Holy Name. Let him strive to acquire, in ever-growing fulness, those qualities of mind and heart which mark the perfect gentleman; ever remembering that the perfect Christian priest, the man well-disciplined and self-possessed, the man of meekness of heart and of purity of life, the man forgetful of self but keenly considerate of others, is the most perfect gentleman in the world, in the true sense of the word. In proportion as he fosters, cultivates,

and developes these precious qualities, will he acquire the power of acting upon, and of moving, the hearts of his fellow-men; and these are the only means which we can suggest to him for the acquiring of this sublime and precious faculty.

More commonly, as may be easily conceived, the appeal to the passions is *indirect*. There are comparatively few men who possess the precious faculty of acting, directly and immediately, without preamble or preparation, solely through the force and intensity of their own strong feeling, upon the hearts of their fellow men. The appeal to the passions is said to be indirect, when the speaker, instead of proposing to himself to move his audience by the mere force and strength of his own feeling on the subject, brings before their minds, without any direct display of his personal sentiments, in vigorous, earnest, and nervous language, those scenes, circumstances, or occurrences, which he deems fitting and calculated to awaken in the hearts of his hearers the passions which he seeks to excite. We say that such an appeal as this is *indirect*, because, the *primary* object of the speaker is to paint in words the scenes or circumstances, from the consideration of which, those feelings which he desires to excite, naturally but *indirectly*, arise.

In this place, and before proceeding with the further consideration of this subject, it may be useful to call the student's attention to a matter which has an essential connection with this indirect appeal to the passions, and which Dr. Whately treats very fully and developes very ingeniously.

"A curious fact," he says, "is forced upon the attention of every one who has seriously reflected upon the operations of his own mind—viz., that our Feelings and Sentiments are not under the *immediate* influence of the will, as is the case with the Intellectual Faculties. A man may, by a direct act of his will, set himself to calculate, to reason, etc., just as he does to move any of his limbs; but, on the other hand, a direct

volition to hope, to fear, to love or hate, to feel devotion, is often quite useless and ineffectual."* Blair well remarks that this matter is not sufficiently attended to by preachers, who, if they have a point in their sermon to show how much we are bound to be grateful to God, or to be compassionate to the poor, are apt to imagine this to be a pathetic part; confounding the propriety of being moved, with the fact of a person being or not being actually under the influence of the passion. In other words, many men mistake for a feeling of gratitude their voluntary reflections on the subject, and their conviction that the case is one which calls for gratitude, etc. The fact that I am bound to be deeply grateful to God for all the graces he has bestowed upon me, is very different from a real feeling of gratitude.†

If, then, our feelings be not under the direct influence of the will, how, asks Whately, is the difficulty to be surmounted, how are they to be reached? And, he answers, that good sense suggests the remedy. It is in vain to form a will to quicken or lower the circulation of the blood, but, we may, by a voluntary act, swallow a medicine which will have that effect. In like manner, although we cannot, by a direct volition, excite or allay any sentiment or emotion, we may, by a voluntary act, fill the understanding with such thoughts as shall *indirectly* operate upon the Feelings or Passions. And, precisely in the same manner in which we thus indirectly excite any passion in ourselves, are we to proceed when we desire to make the indirect appeal to the passions of an audience.

Hence, the conclusion that, inasmuch as the Feelings, Sentiments, etc., are not under the immediate control of the will, the appeal to the passions is, as an ordinary rule, *indirect;* or, in other words, that no sentiment or feeling is excited by thinking about it, or attending to it, but, by thinking about and attending to such objects as are calculated to awaken it.

* Whately's Rhetoric. † Ibid.

To every emotion or passion Nature has adapted a set of corresponding objects, and the emotion is raised in the mind by bringing this object in strong, graphic, and moving terms before it.* The foundation, therefore, of all successful execution in the way of the indirect appeal to the pathetic, is to paint the object of the passion which we wish to raise in the most natural and striking manner, and to describe it with such circumstances as are likely to awaken it in the minds of others. It is evident that this result will not be brought about by mere argumentation. Arguments, no matter how powerful they may be, to prove the fitness or reasonableness of our being moved in a certain way, merely dispose us, at the very most, for entering into such an emotion, but they do not excite it. The preacher, whilst employing them, speaks only to our reason or our conscience, but, he must do more than this. He must also speak to our heart; and, therefore, if he would excite within us the sentiment of compassion, for example, he must not only prove to us that such a sentiment is a noble disposition, but he must dwell upon, and develope those circumstances, which are calculated to awaken it. He must set before us in moving terms a lively description of the distress suffered by him for whom he would interest us; and, then, and not till then, our hearts begin to be moved, and our compassion begins to flow.

All this supposes, of course, a close study and an intimate knowledge of the human heart, and of those springs by which it is directed and governed. It also supposes a facility of description, a command of language, and a certain copiousness of detail in working out the conceptions of the mind, or, in painting those real occurrences which are presented to an audience, with the object of exciting becoming feelings or emotions. In a description of anything which is to act upon the Feelings, it is evident that the more perfect and complete that description is, the more complete will be

* Blair.

the success of the appeal, always supposing that we do not transgress the bounds of nature, and become too artificial or laboured. Quintilian explains this by a very appropriate example. A person may tell you, he observes, that a certain city was sacked; but, although that one word implies all that really occurred, he will produce little or no impression upon your mind in comparison of one who brings before you a description of those terrible acts of slaughter and bloodshed which always accompany such a scene. Or, as he adds very pithily, to tell the *whole* is by no means the same as to tell *everything.*

We may, perhaps, render our meaning more clear, and our idea of the difference between the direct and the indirect appeal to the feelings more sensible, by an example. Let us suppose a preacher to have selected the Sacred Passion of Christ as the subject of his discourse. If he confine himself to the history of the various stages of that tremendous tragedy, bringing forward in earnest and pathetic language, but without any direct expression of his own sentiments, those circumstances of time, place, person, etc., which he deems most fitting to awaken feelings of compunction, gratitude, love, etc., in the souls of his hearers, his appeal to the passions is so far *indirect.* But, if, without any such description, or, at its conclusion, he break forth into a strong and ardent expression of those sentiments with which he himself has become inflamed by the consideration of his subject; and, if, by the mere force, and as the mere result of this strong feeling, he succeed in awakening within the hearts of his hearers those same sentiments by which his own is so deeply moved, his appeal in this case is *direct.* Hence, it will not unfrequently happen, that the direct appeal will follow the indirect, which will thus serve as a preparation for it, whilst, at the same time, it will render it more efficacious and telling. Hence, too, that appeal to the passions which combines the direct and the indirect, or, in other words,

which makes the indirect the foundation upon which the direct appeal to the feelings rests and is built, will be found, as an ordinary rule, not only the easiest and most practicable to the preacher, but the most efficacious and the most telling upon his audience.

We have many examples of the force of the indirect appeal to the feelings. One of the most striking is to be found in the Fourth Book of Kings, chap. 6, which contains an account of the siege of Samaria and the terrible famine suffered by the inhabitants.

"And as the king of Israel was passing by the wall, a certain woman cried out to him, saying: Save me, my lord, O king.

"And he said, if the Lord doth not save thee, how can I save thee? out of the barn-door, or out of the wine-press? And the king said to her: What aileth thee? And she answered:

"This woman said to me: Give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we shall eat my son to-morrow.

"So we boiled my son, and eat him. And I said to her on the next day: Give thy son that we may eat him. And she hath hid her son.

"When the king heard this, he rent his garments, and passed by upon the wall. And all the people saw the hair-cloth which he wore next to his flesh."

No words could give a more lively idea of the state to which the inhabitants of the besieged city were reduced, whilst no direct appeal could be so successful in exciting those feelings of horror which arise within in the heart at the mere recital of this terrible scene. Again, how powerfully, although indirectly, the sacred writer appeals to the sentiment of compassion, in describing the lamentation of David over Saul and Jonathan,* one of the most beautiful and touching pieces of composition which was ever penned.

* 2 Kings, i. 17.

And more strongly still is the same sentiment excited by the description of David's sorrow for his unworthy son Absalom. "The King therefore being much moved, went up to the high-chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went he spake in this manner: My son Absalom, Absalom my son: who would grant me that I might die for thee, Absalom my son, my son Absalom."* Who can read these words, so touching in their simplicity, without feeling his heart excited to compassion for the father who could thus bewail the untimely death of his rebellious and ungrateful child; or how could the sacred writer have taken a more effectual means of awaking this sentiment, than by this natural and life-like description of the King's sorrow. Perhaps one of the most artistic and highly-wrought examples of the *indirect* appeal to the passions is to be found in the speech of Anthony over the dead body of Cæsar. It is almost impossible to conceive, that any direct appeal could have been equally successful in stirring up those strong and fierce passions, which are represented as having being the result of this crafty, but most skilful, address.

It would be useless to dwell at greater length, in this place, on the necessity of moving the passions in order to secure the end of a persuasive oration, neither is it necessary to examine critically the nature of those passions. The ancient rhetoricians lay down a very elaborate system according to which the appeals to the passions are to be conducted. They enquire metaphysically into the nature of every passion, give a definition and description of it, treat of its cause, its effects, and its concomitants, and thence deduce technical rules for working upon it. Aristotle, especially, has discussed this matter with great subtility, and what he has written may, as Blair remarks, be read with great profit as a piece of moral philosophy, but we doubt whether this study will have much influence in rendering

* 2 Kings, xviii. 33.

the preacher more pathetic, since we doubt whether any mere philosophical knowledge will do much to give a man the power of moving. For this reason, and because we shall treat sufficiently of the subject when speaking of the method of conducting the pathetic part of a discourse, we have not deemed it necessary in this place to enter into any more critical examination of the passions, but shall at once proceed to consider the conditions which are requisite, and the order in which the appeal to the passions is to be carried on; first briefly remarking, that, although, as is evident, a discourse does not always directly tend to persuade, still that this is its general characteristic and scope, since instruction and argumentation merely pave the way for persuasion, of whose peculiar characteristics they ought to partake, as far as is consonant to their own natural and proper qualities. For example, the first quality of an argument, no doubt, is sound reasoning; but, the rhetorical argument, as we have already shown, is, by its amplification, the language in which it is clothed, and the manner in which it is put, adapted not only to convince, but, also, in a certain measure and degree, to persuade. The appeal to the passions is not confined to any particular part, but may be employed throughout the course of a sermon, as the nature of the subject and the experience of the preacher may suggest. As a general rule it is out of place in the introduction. It comes in, both properly and powerfully, although in a modified degree, at the conclusion of each part or point of a sermon, since we there wind up some argument, or class of proofs, which we naturally seek to drive home, not only to the intellect, but to the hearts of our hearers. Its place, *par excellence*, where it reigns supreme is, however, as we shall show later on, in the Peroration, or, conclusion of a discourse.

SECTION III.

CERTAIN CONDITIONS WHICH ARE REQUIRED IN HIM WHO APPEALS TO THE PASSIONS.

In order to move a Christian audience, to touch the heart and change it from vice to virtue, it is clear that a man must be something more than a mere actor; that he must possess some higher qualifications than those required in him who plays his part upon the profane stage, and, who, when he is a master of his art, is able to acquire such a wonderful, although temporary influence over the feelings of his audience. The Christian preacher must be an orator, but, more than that, he must be a man of edifying life, and a man of prayer. He must be a man of edifying life, since his audience will not allow themselves to be truly and efficaciously moved and changed by the words of one whose conduct is a living and open contradiction to his preaching. He must be a man of prayer, because, however much he may labour, and however great his natural talents may be, it is the all-powerful grace of God alone which can crown his preaching with a fruitful increase.—Paul may plant, and Apollo may water, but it is God who giveth the increase—and this grace he will only obtain by fervent prayer for the success of that great work, which, undertaken with a pure intention and in the simple discharge of duty, has for its sole object the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls.

Another essential qualification, required in him who aspires to move others, is to be first deeply moved himself, and, so to speak, inspired by his subject. *Cor sapientis erudiet os ejus, et labiis ejus addet gratiam,** says the Holy Ghost. The true orator, in the strict sense of the word, must be a man endowed with lively sensibilities; with a keen appreciation of the beautiful, the sublime, and the true; and possessed of

* Prov. xvi. 23.

strong, but, of course, well-disciplined passions. He must be able to feel, and he must be able to express strongly that which he feels deeply. Experience teaches that the heart alone which is itself moved is able to move the hearts of others. "I have tried," says Cicero, "all the means of moving. I have raised them to the highest degree of perfection which was in my power, but, I candidly confess, that I owe my success much less to my own efforts than to the force of the passions which agitate me when I speak in public, and which carry me out of myself. It was their force which enabled me to reduce Hortensius to silence, and to close the mouth of Cataline."* "We aspire," says Quintilian, "to move others strongly. Let us first feel in our own hearts those sentiments with which we seek to animate them. How shall I soften others if my own words prove that I myself am unmoved? How shall I inflame the hearts of my hearers if I myself am cold? How shall I draw the tears from their eyes if my own are dry? It is impossible. You cannot enkindle a conflagration without fire, as you cannot fertilize a field without the dews of Heaven."† Hence, the well-known and familiar sentence of Horace:

> ". . . . . *Si vis me flere, dolendum est*
> *Primum ipsi tibi.*"

And the reason of all this is very plain. When the preacher is profoundly penetrated with, and moved by his subject, his interior emotion imparts to his words, his looks, his gestures, his whole bearing, a warmth and feeling which exercise an irresistible influence upon his hearers. To this source, too, is doubtless to be traced the real inspiration of the *sympathetic* voice, that voice, or, rather, that quality of the voice which is of such inestimable value to him who possesses it; that quality for the acquiring of which we can lay down no technical rules; which we cannot define; which we cannot describe beyond saying that it is a *something* in the tone

* Orat. cxxxii. & cxxix. † Lib. vi.

of the preacher which exercises an irresistible attraction upon his hearers; which, before he has uttered ten sentences, has enlisted them instinctively on his side, and predisposed them, even before they have heard his discourse, to think as he thinks, and to will as he wills. We have a striking instance of this in St. Ignatius Loyola, who, although he preached with the utmost simplicity of language, did so with such an unction and emotion, that, even those amongst his audience who did not understand the language in which he spoke were, nevertheless, moved to tears by the very tones of his voice—the earnestness and burning zeal which appeared in his every gesture and look. If we do not really feel in our own heart those sentiments with which we seek to inspire others, it is vain to make pretence of possessing them. It is vain to put them on as the profane actor does; although, it may be fairly doubted whether the real actor, the real man of genius, does not truly succeed in making himself feel, for the time being, those affections and passions which he expresses so powerfully, and by whose means he acts so wonderfully on his audience. It is the heart alone which speaks to the heart, and no failure is more deplorable, as no pretence is more absurd, than that of the preacher who seeks to move others, and to inspire them with deep emotions and generous sentiments, whilst his own heart is perfectly cold and unmoved, dead to those feelings which he aspires to awaken in them. In such a case his gesticulation is in excess, and his tears are but pretended. There is neither reality, depth, nor meaning in his affected emotion. Either he moves his audience to laughter at his ridiculous acting, or he inspires them with compassion for his utter failure. Let us listen for a moment to St. Francis of Sales: "Your words," he says, "must be inflamed, not by cries and excessive gesticulation, but by the interior warmth and feeling of your soul. They must spring from the heart rather than from the mouth. It has been beautifully said that it is the

heart which appeals to the heart, the tongue only speaks to the ears." Hence the reason why some preachers who are, in a certain sense of the word, very popular, produce so little real fruit. Their discourses are composed in the most brilliant style, and are brimming with figures of speech, and flowers of rhetoric. So far as regards mere composition, nothing is wanting; and, yet, as we listen to the preacher whilst he pours forth all this beautiful language, we cannot help experiencing a sensation that he does not really feel the sentiments which he expresses; that his language does not spring warm from his heart; that he is, to speak the plain unvarnished truth, but a declaimer. On the same ground we can explain the success of those holy men who conduct the "Missions" which produce such wonderful results. It is not that they are more learned, that they instruct more clearly, or reason more profoundly than ordinary preachers; but, it is because they understand better how to appeal to the heart, and because they speak with the burning words of men who appreciate very keenly the interests of God and the salvation of souls. Their words carry not only conviction, but persuasion, to the hearts of their hearers, and hence the triumphs over sin, over habits which appeared inveterate, and over passions which seemed invincible, which are the glorious results of a successful "Mission." Hence, too, the extempore sermon is, *positis ponendis*, often so much more successful than the discourse which is written and committed to memory, since it gains in force and feeling what it may lose in mere strict correctness of composition. Dr. Newman has the following beautiful and practical remarks on this subject:—

"Earnestness creates earnestness in others by sympathy; and the more a preacher loses and is lost to himself, the more does he gain his brethren. Nor is it without some logical force also; for what is powerful enough to absorb and possess a preacher, has at least a *primâ facie* claim of attention

on the part of his hearers. On the other hand, anything which interferes with this earnestness, or which argues its absence, is still more certain to blunt the force of the most cogent argument conveyed in the most eloquent language. Hence it is that the great philosopher of antiquity, in speaking, in his Treatise on Rhetoric, of the various kinds of persuasives which are available in the Art, considers the most authoritative of these to be that which is drawn from personal traits of a moral nature evident in the orator; for such matters are cognizable by all men, and the common sense of the world decides that it is safer, when it is possible, to commit oneself to the judgment of men of character, than to any considerations addressed merely to the feelings or the reason.

"On these gounds I would go on to lay down a precept, which I trust is not extravagant, when allowance is made for the preciseness and the point which are unavoidable in all categorical statements upon matters of conduct. It is, that preachers should neglect everything besides devotion to their one object, and earnestness in enforcing it, till they in some good measure attain to these requisites. Talent, logic, learning, words, manner, voice, action, all are required for the perfection of a preacher; but 'one thing is necessary,'—an intense perception and appreciation of the end for which he preaches, and that is, to be the minister of some definite spiritual good to those who hear him. Who could wish to be more eloquent, more powerful, more successful than the Teacher of the Nations? yet who more earnest, who more natural, who more unstudied, who more self-forgetting than he? . . . I do not mean that a preacher must aim at *earnestness*, but that he must aim at his *object*, which is to do some spiritual good to his hearers, and which will at once *make* him earnest. It is said, that, when a man has to cross an abyss by a narrow plank thrown over it, it is his wisdom not to look at the plank, along which lies his path, but to fix his eyes steadily

on the point in the opposite precipice, at which the plank ends. It is by gazing at the object which he must reach, and ruling himself by it, that he secures to himself the power of walking to it straight and steadily. The case is the same in moral matters; no one will become really earnest, by aiming directly at earnestness; any one may become earnest, by meditating on the motives, and by drinking at the sources, of earnestness. We may of course work ourselves up into a pretence, nay into a paroxysm, of earnestness; as we may chafe our cold hands till they are warm. But when we cease chafing, we lose the warmth again; on the contrary, let the sun come out and strike us with his beams, and we need no artificial chafing to be warm. The hot words, then, and energetic gestures of a preacher, taken by themselves, are just as much signs of earnestness, as rubbing the hands or flapping the arms together are signs of warmth; though they are natural where earnestness already exists, and pleasing as being its spontaneous concomitants. To sit down to compose for the pulpit, with a resolution to be eloquent, is one impediment to persuasion; but to be determined to be earnest is absolutely fatal to it.

"He who has before his mental eye the Four Last Things, will have the true earnestness—the horror or the rapture of one who witnessed a conflagration, or discerned some rich and sublime propect of natural scenery. His countenance, his manner, his voice, speak for him, in proportion as his view has been vivid and minute. The great English poet has described this sort of eloquence, when a calamity had befallen:—

> Yea, this man's brow, like to a title page,
> Foretells the nature of a tragic volume.
> Thou tremblest, and the whiteness in thy cheek
> Is apter than thy tongue to tell thy errand.

"It is this earnestness, in the supernatural order, which is the eloquence of saints; and not of saints only, but of all Christian preachers, according to the measure of their faith

and love. As the case would be with one who has actually seen what he relates, the herald of tidings of the invisible world also will be, from the nature of the case, whether vehement or calm, sad or exulting, always simple, grave, emphatic, and peremptory; and all this, not because he has proposed to himself to be so, but because certain intellectual convictions involve certain external manifestations."*

We may, therefore, lay it down as a general principle in this matter, that a preacher, in order to move, must himself be deeply impressed with his subject, and intimately affected by it. But the difficulty of course is to secure these essential conditions. It is easy enough when Nature has endowed a preacher, and it is one of her most precious gifts, with that keen and tender sensibility of soul which enables him at once, not only to *appreciate*, but to *feel*, whatever is true, beautiful, and sublime. It is easy for such a man to be eloquent, to pour forth from the hidden depths of his own heart, those grand ideas, those noble sentiments, those generous emotions, which move his hearers even as he himself is moved. It is this exquisite sensibility which imparts all their charm to the writings of Fenelon, which renders some of the compositions of St. Bernard so pathetic in the truest meaning of the word, and which inspires some of the masterpieces of St. John Chrysostom. If a man have not received the gift of this precious sensibility, although he may become a great lecturer, he will never become a great preacher. Incapable of true feeling or emotion himself, how can he excite these sentiments in others? Let him who has received these inestimable gifts in their fulness labour to develope them to the highest degree. Let him who has received them in a lesser measure, labour all the more earnestly to turn to the very best account the talent which it has pleased his Master to entrust to him. Let both the one and the other be persuaded, as we have already said, that purity of life,

* University Preaching.

that a spirit of prayer and detachment from the world, that a burning zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls, are the most efficacious means of nourishing and developing these precious qualities. If a man be pure, if he be a man of prayer, if his soul be truly inflamed with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of the souls for whom He died, it is impossible for him to speak coldly and without feeling on those sublime and important subjects which are so intimately and essentially connected with the dearest interests of his Master, and of his flock. Such a man must necessarily be a man of feeling, in a higher or lower degree; and, in that degree also, he must necessarily be an eloquent man.

Although internal feeling is the soul of eloquence, still, it is evident, that the preacher, in order to act upon his hearers, must be able to paint vividly those sentiments which he feels deeply. Hence the necessity of what is technically called word-painting. The great orator not only expresses his sentiments, but he paints them. The inward feeling shows itself in the tones of his voice, in his gesture, in his countenance; in a word, in the whole exterior deportment of the preacher, which bears witness to the reality and the depth, as well as to the extent, of that feeling. It also not rarely gives shape and form to his very words, and, when this is the case, its result is the most powerful and vivid kind of word-painting, and that *direct* action of the preacher upon the souls of his hearers which has already been described. When, however, the inspiration may not be so intense, nor its influence upon our words so keen and direct, we must in order to give vivid expression to our sentiments, avail ourselves of those other succours which are placed at our disposal, viz., imagination, rhetoric, and taste. The *imagination* is that faculty of the soul which represents objects, the creations of the mind or actual occurrences, in such a lively manner, and under such various points of view, as to bring

them in distinct and living form before us. It renders them, so to speak, tangible and real; it gives them "a local habitation and a name;" it clothes the naked and perhaps uninviting truth in those rich and beautiful garments of conception and of expression, which render it potent to interest, to soften, and to move. The fruits of the imagination, says Longinus, animate and give life to a discourse; they captivate and persuade. The means of cultivating and developing this inestimable faculty, so precious in itself, so useful and so necessary to the orator, consists in representing vividly to oneself those actions of which we speak, just as if we ourselves had seen them, and were merely relating what we had seen; in studying deeply circumstances of persons, time, place, and manner—attending principally to those which are best adapted to appeal to the imagination; and in reading good authors—observing how they, by lively images, render their ideas sensible and real, and thus bring them home in all their vivid reality to the minds and hearts of their readers. *Rhetoric* is the auxiliary on which the imagination principally relies for aid, cultivation, development, and expression. The vivid conceptions of the imagination find their most lively and most telling expression in the principal rhetorical figures; as in *exclamations* and *apostrophes*, especially such as are addressed in tender and fervent words to God, in *interrogation*, the most lively and spirited of all the figures of rhetoric; in *dialogue*, which brings the preacher and his audience into the most direct and intimate relation with each other, and which, therefore, is so well adapted to impart life to a discourse; in *soliloquy*, by which the hearer is made to enter into himself, to reproach himself for the past, and inspire himself with good resolutions for the future; in *adjuration*, which consists in calling God, his saints, the altar, the cross, or the very walls of the church, to bear witness to the pious intentions of our audience; in fine, in those sighs and ardent desires which the pious preacher addresses to

God during his sermon for the conversion of his flock, for the grace of causing them to love the God who poured forth his precious blood for their salvation. When the preacher speaks from a heart that is animated by a lively faith and a tender love, he is certain to speak with effect. A short prayer; an aspiration of love, zeal, or desire of God's glory; one glance of his eyes to heaven; even a single sigh, coming from such a man, is sufficient to impart a force to the most simple reflections which will move an audience to tears. Such is the effect of sanctity and zeal in a preacher.

Finally, the orator must be a man of *good taste*—that pure and delicate instinct which intimately appreciates whatever is truly beautiful; which discovers intuitively whatever is false, coarse, or unbecoming; which renders an idea or sentiment with perfect truth and perfect propriety. Without its control and direction the imagination runs riot; and rhetoric scatters its flowers without order or discernment. Governed and directed by good taste, imagination and rhetoric are restrained within due limits. The colours which are to embellish and give beauty to a discourse are distributed with wisdom, instead of being lavished with tasteless profusion. Everything is in its place, where it ought to be, and as it ought to be. The great and important faculty of taste is cultivated and developed by the study of good models, by the habit of reflection, and by a severe and unsparing criticism of our own compositions, whether spoken or written.

It is scarcely necessary to add, that the true orator is not only animated by strong feelings, but that he expresses those feelings in the proper language of the passions. The language of the man who is under the influence of real and strong passion, is simple and unaffected. Altogether taken up by the feeling which has so deeply moved him, he scarcely bestows a thought upon the manner in which he gives expression to it. He merely seeks to represent it in all

its circumstances as strongly as he feels it. He has no time, and less inclination, to think about mere words, and hence the simplicity and perhaps plainness of the language which he employs. His expression, his voice, his gesture, are regulated by the depth of his feeling, and although his language may be bold, although he may employ strong figures, he will use neither frippery ornament nor mere finery. His figures will be those of thought rather than of words; and, as his thoughts are bold, ardent, and simple, so will the figures of which he makes use and the whole tenor of his language partake of the same qualities. As Dr. Blair remarks on this matter, if he were to stay until he could work up his style, he would infallibly cool his ardour, and, losing his ardour, he would touch the heart no more.

SECTION IV.

THE ORDER TO BE OBSERVED IN APPEALING TO THE PASSIONS.

That the appeal to the passions may produce its due effect, it must be conducted with great wisdom and discretion, and, in as far as true passion and feeling can be subjected to fixed rules, according to the general principles laid down on this matter by the great authorities on oratory.

1. In the first place, there must be a natural relation of convenience and agreement between our subject and the appeal to the passions. In other words, the subject, and that part of it especially to which we apply the pathetic, must admit of this appeal. There are simple subjects in which a vehement appeal to the passions would be utterly ridiculous. There are others, as for example, the enormity of sin, the death of the sinner, judgment, hell, etc., which admit of the most powerful appeals to the feelings of our hearers. Strong appeals to the passions are here in their

proper place, and, when employed by a preacher who is truly penetrated by his subject, they produce the most striking and consoling results. Again, there are other subjects, as the love of God and our neighbour, heaven, patience, charity, etc., in treating which it is necessary and becoming to appeal to the more tender passions of the soul. Indeed, under this head we may range the greater number of those subjects which the preacher will have to treat, since our holy religion is founded on charity and love, and since the heart of the sinner is much more easily gained, as a general rule, by sweetness than through fear. Hence, too, we may conclude that the leading characteristic of pulpit oratory should be *unction*, that sweet, pious, and affectionate effusion of a heart which is full of God, which makes its way, without violence or uproar, into the soul of the hearer; which awakens there the most tender and most becoming emotions, and thus gains it to God with all its aspirations and all its powers. Amongst the great French preachers, Massillon reigns supreme in the possession of this quality.

2. We must gradually prepare the way for the appeal to the passions. We must have gained, in the first place, the understanding and judgment of our hearers; so, that, when the warmth of feeling and the emotion produced by the appeal to the passions shall have passed, they may be convinced that they acted as reasonable men, that there were sufficient grounds for their entering into the cause, and that they were not carried away by mere delusion. Preparing them in this manner by instruction and solid argumentation, we lead our hearers by degrees to the appeal to the feelings, which thus appears to come in as a natural consequence of what has been said. If we throw in these appeals abruptly, without order or a proper preparation of the minds of our audience to receive them, we depart from the great principles laid down by nature, and instead of becoming pathetic, we run the risk of becoming ridiculous. This precaution is

doubly necessary when we know our hearers to entertain dispositions which are anything but favourable to our purpose. We must in these circumstances commence, as we have already said, by entering into their thoughts, and conforming ourselves to their situation. We must then gently soothe, and thus remove, the passions which are opposed to those which we wish to excite; and finally, appeal to those feelings and emotions which we aspire to awaken in them. If we do not thus gradually and carefully prepare the way for the appeal to the passions, it is impossible that it can produce any real or lasting effect.

3. Every appeal to the passions ought to be properly sustained, and not concluded with too much haste, or with any undue and ill-timed brevity. No lasting impression will be produced on the heart, if, in order to pass on to something else, we hastily leave undeveloped the emotion which may have begun to manifest itself. By neglecting properly to sustain the emotion which we profess to excite, we prove that it was merely factitious, that it had no real foundation in our own heart; and thus we destroy its effect. At the same time our hearers, who had begun to be moved, and who were delivering themselves up, willingly and gladly, to those emotions which we had succeeded, to some extent, in exciting in them, finding that the preacher suddenly stops short and concludes where they thought that he was but commencing, also, on their side, draw back and return to their coldness and insensibility. It is a great want of tact and of taste, when we have once begun to appeal to the feelings of our hearers, to leave that appeal imperfect and only half worked out. When once undertaken we should labour to render it as complete as possible, developing it in its varied bearings with all the energy at our command, that thus we may enter more intimately into the hearts of our hearers, and move them more deeply. Unless we render our appeal thus effective we had better leave it alone.

4. Whilst we labour to prepare our audience gradually for the appeal to their feelings, and whilst we properly sustain and carry out that appeal, we must equally guard against another extreme—viz., the pressing of these movements, or appeals, too far. If we must know where to begin, still more must we know where to leave off. The state of the soul whilst under the influence of strong feeling is, to a certain degree, a state of violence, and therefore it must necessarily be transitory and brief. Prolonged feeling, when strong, is contrary to nature. The stronger any emotion is the more brief is its duration. When the preacher has succeeded in awakening in his hearers those deep and efficacious affections which are to win the will to God, he ought to be very much on his guard lest he fritter them away in empty words. Hence it is that the language of the passions is strong, vivid, rapid—sometimes even rough. It has no time to occupy itself about nicely balanced periods, ingenious figures, or highly finished sentences. The emotions which, rushing hot from the heart, are merely finding expression in the words of the lips, are only solicitous about finding that expression, not about the language in which they may be worded. There is no rule for the expression of emotions such as these—for the voice in which they are uttered, and the gestures by which they find additional force—save those emotions themselves: just as the soldier, whose whole energies are bent upon driving the enemy from the gate of his city, does not stop one instant to consider whether the spectators are admiring his efforts, provided those efforts are being crowned with success. Whilst the preacher is under the influence of sincere, honest, and fervent zeal; whilst he pours forth his burning words from a heart inflamed with his subject and the eternal interests of his flock; let him not doubt that nature will supply, in abundance, such adornment and figures of speech as his subject demands or requires. The very force, strength, and unction of his language, in

such circumstances, will be its best adornment. But, as we have already said, let him be on his guard against pushing this too far. That which is strong must be brief, as that which is violent cannot endure. Even supposing that the lungs of the preacher were robust enough to enable him to thunder forth during the whole course of his sermon, it does not follow that his hearers would have courage or strength enough to sustain the continued assaults of his fiery eloquence. Besides, we have shown that the appeals to the passions, in the sense in which we have explained the term, are intended to produce effects that may, to a certain degree, be called extraordinary; and that their aid is only invoked in order to perfect the work of instruction and argumentation. If this be the true view of their employment, it follows that, as they must not be pushed too far, so neither must they be employed too frequently. If employed too frequently, they naturally enough lose that extraordinary effect which renders them such an efficacious instrument in the hand of the preacher. If you are continually endeavouring to awaken strong emotions in the soul, she becomes accustomed to, and hardened by them; just as the body becomes hardened and callous under repeated blows; and thus their effect is utterly destroyed. Hence, although there is no part of a discourse which ought not to be animated by his zeal and rendered interesting by those temperate appeals to the feelings which the nature of the subject, and the experience of the preacher, will infallibly suggest to him; still, it is equally true and certain that, what we may call the more formal appeal to the feelings, must only be employed at intervals during a sermon, and with a perfect agreement of fitness and relation between the sentiment, its depth and expression, and the general nature of our subject, as well as that particular part of the sermon in which we employ it. A natural place for the appeal to the feelings is at the end of each part, or point of a discourse. It is to be presumed that, during the course

of our argumentation, in establishing any one of the points of our sermon, we have taken a good deal of pains to reason clearly, strongly, and in such a manner as to carry conviction to our audience. It is only natural that we should desire to put the finishing stroke to our work by an appeal to the feelings of our hearers; and, thus, this appeal comes in with propriety at the end of each part of our discourse; or, at the conclusion of any argument which we are particularly anxious to drive home. Its peculiar place, however, as we shall presently show, is in the Peroration, or, Conclusion of the Sermon.

In fine, the preacher in his appeals to the feelings must most carefully guard against anything that is in the least degree *outré*, ill-timed, or in bad taste. Let him carefully treasure up the wise saying of Quintilian on this point—*Nihil habet ista res medium, sed aut lacrymas meretur aut risum**—in other words, that there is but a step between the sublime and the ridiculous. If he aspire to the pathetic without succeeding in his efforts, the probability is that he will simply become ridiculous; he will certainly become cold, tedious, and ineffective. *Ne quis, sine summis ingenii viribus, ad movendas lacrymas aggredi audeat. . . . Metiatur ac diligentur æstimet vires suas, et quantum onus subiturus sit, intelligat.*†

SECTION IV.

THE PERORATION: OR, CONCLUSION OF THE DISCOURSE.

After these preliminary observations on "persuasion" in general, and the means by which it is to be secured, we now proceed to treat of the Peroration: or, Conclusion of the discourse. The truth, laid down in our proposition and developed in the division, having been sufficiently explained

* Lib. vi. c. 1 † Ibid.

and confirmed by solid argument during the course of the sermon—in other words, the points of our discourse having been thoroughly established—nothing now remains but to bring the whole matter to a proper and effective conclusion. There is no part of a discourse which requires to be more skilfully managed, and more carefully studied, than the Peroration. This is, indeed, the decisive moment, the last assault which is to decide the victory. Spite of our explanations, spite of our reasoning, it may be that our hearers still hang back, unable to deny the force of our arguments, and yet unwilling to make the generous sacrifices which God demands at their hands. It is in these concluding and decisive moments that we are to bring the full weight of our zeal, of our love, of our ardent desire for the advancement of their best interests, to bear upon the hearts of our hearers. It is in these moments that we are to rush down upon them with all the highest efforts of our talent concentrated on one grand assault; that we are to press the reluctant, but already wavering will, from every side; that we are to leave that will, and the irregular passions by which it is sustained, no loop-hole for escape; that, thus urged, influenced, and moved by every power which one man can bring to bear upon another, we may wring from our hearers full and unconditional submission to the force of those arguments which we have laid before them, and those conclusions which we have rigorously deduced; that thus we may draw from the penitent's eye those saving tears which are to wash even his deadliest sins away; that thus we may awaken those generous resolutions, and obtain those triumphs of grace, which are the trophies, and the only ones, for which the true soldier of Christ so ardently sighs. Hence, the peroration is, above all other parts of a discourse, the place for the appeal to the passions. From the general idea of the nature of those appeals which we have already given, it follows that the Peroration is brief, admitting of no argument

strictly so called, nor of any long explanations. In these last few decisive moments, when the will is to be finally gained or lost, all must be strong, vigorous, passionate, warm from the heart. *Quæ excellant, serventur ad perorandum*,* says Cicero, and Quintilian writes, *Hic, si usquam, totus eloquentiæ fontes aperire licet.*† It is in these supreme moments that passion collects, and animates with its own sacred fire, those strong, impetuous, and ardent appeals—those brilliant turns of thought—those living expressions—those bold figures of speech—those melting images—which pour forth, as it were spontaneously, from the lips of him who is truly inspired by his subject and his mission. And, hence it is, that the discreet and practised preacher not only takes care to reserve his most telling strokes for his peroration, but also to husband sufficient physical strength and vigour with which to deliver them with the fullest effect.

With these remarks on the general nature and object of the Peroration, we will now briefly consider it in detail. A sermon may be either wholly argumentative, wholly exhortatory or pathetic, or, as is the case with ordinary sermons, partly argumentative and partly exhortatory. The conclusion will, naturally, be in accordance with the discourse which it concludes. When the sermon is altogether argumentative or controversial, as may sometimes, although we imagine very rarely, be required, the conclusion will of course consist of a mere recapitulation of the arguments. Such a conclusion, however, has no claim to be called a Peroration in the oratorical meaning of the word. When the sermon is altogether exhortatory, the Peroration is, *a fortiori*, altogether exhortatory too, or taken up with an appeal to the passions, and this is the Peroration strictly so called. However, as neither of the above class of sermons is likely to be frequently employed by ordinary pastors, preaching to ordinary congregations, we shall not spend any time

* De Orat. Lib. ii. † Lib. vi. c. 1.

in considering its proper peroration, as this is sufficiently clear from the general principles which have been already laid down, and the nature of the case.

The peroration of the ordinary sermon, which is partly argumentative and partly exhortatory or pathetic, comprises as a general rule, which of course suffers exceptions, four leading heads.

1. The first point in such a conclusion is a brief recapitulation and summary of the parts of the discourse, and of those leading arguments which we deem most conducive to persuasion. By thus collecting them in one serried and compact body, they produce a greater impression upon the mind and heart, and thus gain a more complete victory over our hearers, than they do when merely brought forward one by one, and without the additional strength which they acquire from mutual support. *Si per singula minus moverat, turbâ valet.** This recapitulation, however, must be extremely brief, rapid, and almost imperceptible to the audience, since they will naturally be unwilling to return over the ground which they have already travelled. As Cicero strikingly expresses it, our end in this matter is, *ut memoria, non oratio, renovata videatur.*† Without we manage it in this manner our hearers will not listen to our recapitulation. Besides, our object in this place is not to prove, but to add additional force to those proofs which we have already established. Into this recapitulation we must throw as much energy and warmth, and as great variety of expression, as possible. Indeed, we should contrive to give our hearers this brief, rapid, and vigorous resumè of the leading points and arguments of our discourse, without allowing them, in as far as such a mode of proceeding is practicable, to perceive that we are recapitulating. In other words, the matter should be so arranged that, whilst, indirectly, we recapitulate our arguments, we do it in such a

* Lib. vi. † De Inven. lib. i.

manner as really to make an appeal to those passions which are proper to be awakened in the case.

2. The second head of the peroration should embrace the special fruit of the discourse, or the practical conclusions and resolutions regarding a more holy life, which naturally flow from the great truth which has formed the subject of it. St. Liguori lays down special rules concerning this point, and recommends it to preachers in the most earnest manner. He counsels them to embody these resolutions, whenever it can be done, in an act of contrition, which they are to repeat from the pulpit in tones of the most lively compunction and of the deepest and warmest love; since this is the favourable moment, he says, in which your hearers are prepared to break forth in sighs and tears, and return to the God whom they have so long, perhaps, forsaken.

3. The third element of the peroration consists in that earnest, burning, and zealous exhortation which is to penetrate the most hidden recesses of every heart, which is to change every will, and render the triumph of grace complete. This is the peroration, strictly so called; and having dwelt so fully upon its nature, object, and means, in other parts of this chapter, it would be only repetition and loss of time to delay longer upon it here. We will merely remark, that, as we advance in our peroration, so are we to advance in earnestness and fervour. The same principle holds in this, as in other parts of a sermon, *Ut augeatur semper, et increscat oratio.* It is very effective when, in our final appeal, we can strongly and vividly reproduce the leading idea of the whole discourse. It has a very great effect upon our hearers, after so many solid proofs and so many skilful strokes of oratory have been devoted to it, to see the great leading truth, the parent idea, appear once more at this crowning moment in all the force of its beautiful simplicity, in all the strength of its unity. The discourse thus finishes where it began, and thus exhibits itself once more in all the attractiveness of that

unity which is at once its beauty and its strength. This method of concluding becomes more striking still when we close our discourse with the same text of Scripture with which we commenced it, thus fixing the seal of God's Holy Word upon that which we began in His name, which we have carried on to His greater honour and glory, and which we thus conclude with the self-same words which contained His commission to us in the beginning, as they now place the stamp of His divine authority upon the end of our work, a work so humble and imperfect in itself, so grand and so august as the work of His minister who has said, *Qui vos audit, me audit; et qui vos spernit, me spernit.*

Finally, the peroration is most fitly concluded by a short and fervent prayer addressed to Jesus Christ, His blessed mother, or His saints; to ask grace and strength to put into effect those holy resolutions with which we have been inspired. Such was the custom of the great preachers of antiquity. Such is the pious practice of many modern orators, and, although it is not of obligation, it is well worthy of imitation. Massillon, Pere MacCarthy, and many other eminent preachers were accustomed to clothe this concluding prayer in a Scriptural garb, by putting it in the form of a paraphrase of some select text of Holy Writ; and this, we need hardly add, renders it doubly effective, whilst it also naturally leads the way to the Benediction with which the preacher concludes his discourse.

CHAPTER IX.

FINAL PREPARATION.

UPON arriving at this point in our investigation and having conducted the student through all the stages of the remote and proximate preparation, as well as of the actual composition of his discourse, nothing now remains but briefly to consider what may be styled the final preparation to be undergone before the preacher can confidently approach the delivery of his sermon. We may divide this part of our subject into two sections:—I. The careful revision of the written discourse; and, II. The accurate committing of it to memory—without, however, entering into the question of Delivery, properly so called, which we purpose to consider fully in a second and future series of this work.

SECTION I.

CAREFUL REVISION OF THE WRITTEN DISCOURSE.

We have taken it for granted that the young preacher will write at least a considerable number of his sermons, and that he will do so with great care and diligent attention. In order, however, that his success may be perfect, and the fruit of his labours permanent, there is yet another stage to be undergone in his preparation, even after the happy and felicitous completion of his written discourse, and this is a careful revision and correction of his composition. His first

essay, no matter how happy it may have been, will necessarily be full of imperfections, and when the young writer treats himself too tenderly in regard of these imperfections, he takes the most efficacious means he could devise of rendering them permanent and incurable. He must, then, carefully revise the first written copy of his sermon, diligently correcting the construction and connection of his sentences, the turns of thought, the figures of speech, and whatever he may deem improper, incorrect, or contrary to order and precision in his expressions. Like the skilful painter, who is never weary of adding those finishing touches which bring out his picture in all the perfection of its beauty, the diligent writer is never weary of adding those figures and those oratorical touches which may increase the effect of his discourse, never weary of retrenching and remorselessly sacrificing everything which may be irregular or not to the point —of supplying that which may be wanting—of transporting that which may be out of place—of modifying whatever may need modification or correction. Always supposing that he does not interfere with, nor diminish the force and freshness of his first ideas and his original conceptions, the more he revises his discourse the more will the writer contribute to its perfection and beauty, since each time that he goes over it he is certain to find something to amend, to correct, or to change. The first revision at least is essential. Whilst committing his discourse to memory there are many points which will occur to the writer as requiring modification, if not correction; many striking figures which will add to its beauty, many developments which will increase its strength, are certain to present themselves to his mind, and these, of course, must be added. He will also find it most useful to retouch his sermon after he has delivered it, since it is in the moment of delivery that the preacher sees most clearly, as well what is wanting, as what is most effective and telling, in his discourse. In fine, if he wish to render his

work most perfect and complete, he will, after some years spent in the preaching of the Divine Word, read again and revise the productions of his earlier days. When reflection and experience shall have chastened and matured his judgment; when that undue tenderness for his first productions which, perhaps, dimmed his sight to their imperfections, shall have passed away; when the warmth of the youthful imagination, which is a very precious gift in its own season, shall have been toned down by the weight of growing years; he will be better able to hold the scales with an impartial hand, and to define the limits between what is pleasing and what is useful, between what is calculated to flatter the ear and what is potent to influence the will and move the heart to better and holier things. In this way, the sermons which he composed with so much diligence and care, with so much warmth and earnestness, in the first years of his ministry, will be equally useful to him as time rolls on, and he becomes less disposed for, or less able to undertake, the labour of written composition. Nay, they will become still more useful, since, to the warmth of the youthful imagination which sparkles in their pages, and to the substantial correctness of the doctrine and of the instruction which they contain, he will be able to add that super-eminent quality and element of success which can be gained in no other way, the experience and the power of practical application which are acquired by long years of hard work and of meritorious service in the cultivation of the vineyard of the Lord.

> . . . . *Carmen reprehendite, quod non*
> *Multa dies et multa litura coercuit atque*
> *Præsectum decies non castigavit ad unguem.*

Nor let the young ecclesiastic be terrified from undertaking this revision of his sermons by the thought that it is tedious, painful, and laborious. Let him rather remember that it is this very labour which, if he have the courage to undertake it, is the surest guarantee of his success. If he

be valiant enough to conquer these first difficulties, the habit of writing quickly and well will be the certain fruit of his victory. "I prescribe to those who commence to write," says Quintilian, "slowness and solicitude in composing. It is essential to begin by writing as well as possible: facility will arise from habit. No man will ever learn how to write well by writing quickly; but, in learning how to write well, he will in the end learn to write quickly. *Cito scribendo non fit ut bene scribatur: bene scribendo fit ut cito.** Such has ever been the practice of the greatest writers in every department of literature. Such, as we learn from their own testimony, has been the constant practice of those illustrious pulpit orators who are of necessity the models whom the young preacher is bound to place before his eyes, in whose footsteps he is bound to walk, with an appreciative admiration of their perfections, with a diligent and laborious employment of those means alike indispensable to them and to him, for the attainment of that excellence which they acquired in such an eminent degree, and to which he aspires with such a laudable ambition—the ambition of employing it to the greater glory of God and the salvation of immortal souls.

SECTION II.

NECESSITY AND MANNER OF COMMITTING THE DISCOURSE TO MEMORY.

THE sermon having been accurately composed and carefully revised, nothing remains, in order that the preacher may ascend the Pulpit with confidence and ease, but the perfect and expedite "possession" of it. In other words, he must possess what he has composed, if not *memoriter*, at least so completely, and with such thorough confidence, as will enable him to deliver it with ease, with fluency, and with as near an

* Lib. x. 5.

approximation as is possible under the circumstances, to those qualities which constitute the special attraction of the extempore sermon.

There are some young preachers who, especially in the commencement of their career, are so timid, so nervous, and have such little command of language, as not to be able to utter a single sentence unless they have previously composed it. In this painful position, they are constrained either to content themselves with reading from the pulpit the sermon which they have written, or to undergo the drudgery of committing it, word by word, sentence by sentence, to memory.

Now, in no sense of the word, can *reading* be called *preaching*. A sermon is, of its very nature, as has been already shown, a persuasive oration. In real preaching, one man speaks to another. From the depths of his own heart, the speaker, in warm, earnest, and, in a certain sense, spontaneous language, persuades, entreats, and exhorts his hearer to adopt and embrace those views, and that line of conduct, which are thus urged upon him. The sermon which is written and delivered *memoriter*, is more or less perfect in proportion as it approaches, more or less closely, to this idea of a persuasive oration. A sermon which is prepared, at least substantially, before delivery, as every sermon worthy of the name ought to be prepared, may be made to possess most of the good qualities of the extempore discourse, without its defects. The sermon which is merely read from a paper never has been, and never will be, anything more than a piece of reading. Such a performance never has been, and never will be, made to possess those qualities of warmth, of earnestness, of spontaneity, and of special and varying application, which mark the persuasive oration, and which are distinctive of, and indispensable to, a sermon in the true sense of the word.

"While, then, a preacher will find it becoming and

advisable to put into writing any important discourse beforehand, he will find it equally a point of propriety and expedience not to read it in the pulpit. I am not of course denying his right to use a manuscript, if he wishes; but he will do well to conceal it, as far as he can, or, which is the most effectual concealment, whatever be its counterbalancing disadvantages, to get it mainly by heart. To conceal it, indeed, in one way or other, will be his natural impulse; and this very circumstance seems to show us that to read a sermon needs an apology. For, why should he get it by heart, or conceal his use of it, unless he felt that it was more natural, more decorous, to do without it? And so again, if he employs a manuscript, the more he appears to dispense with it, the more he looks off from it, and directly addresses his audience, the more will he be considered to preach; and, on the other hand, the more will he be judged to come short of preaching, the more sedulous he is in following his manuscript line after line, and by the tone of his voice makes it clear that he has got it safely before him. What is this but a popular testimony to the fact that preaching is not reading, and reading is not preaching?"*

We take it, therefore, for granted, that the young preacher will not attempt to read his discourse. But, what then is he to do in those first days of his ministry, when he is too nervous to trust himself to deliver one really extempore sentence, or, when he may be unable to speak without the most accurate preparation. There is no resource for him, during this time of probation, but to commit his sermon to memory so perfectly that nothing may be able to discompose him at the moment of delivery. There is nothing which gives so much confidence to a young and nervous preacher as the fact of being thoroughly master of his subject. On the other hand, there is nothing so powerfully calculated to embarrass and throw him into confusion, as an imperfect

* University Preaching.

"possession" of the discourse which he intends to deliver. Unable, either from nervousness, timidity, or want of practice and experience, to preach extempore, and having neglected to commit the discourse which he has written to memory perfectly, he is certain to break down. He commences well, but, after a short time, he begins to hesitate, to stammer, to repeat himself, and, probably ends, by taking his manuscript from his breast and reading the remainder of the discourse. Even though he should not break down so completely as this, his mind will be so preoccupied with the mere recollecting of the words of his discourse, as to render his delivery cold and uninteresting to the last degree. This preoccupation of mind extinguishes all fervour and unction, renders his action, if he employ any at all, constrained and stiff, and even deprives his voice of its natural inflections. He stands before his audience merely in the light of a scholar who is repeating a lesson which he has learnt very badly. He compromises the dignity of his ministry; and the intrinsic merit of his discourse, no matter how great it may be, is totally overlooked and forgotten in the badness of his delivery.

There is no way of meeting these very serious drawbacks to anything like success in our ministry, except by committing, accurately and literally, to memory that discourse which we have composed carefully. A sermon well-committed and thoroughly possessed, although it may be of merely average merit, will appear good; and, if it be really good, it will appear excellent. It is related of Massillon, that, being asked one day which of his sermons he considered the best, he answered, "that which I knew the best." And with perfect justice! We have sufficiently explained the inconveniencies under which the preacher who delivers a discourse *memoriter* almost inevitably labours; we have also shown, that the more closely such a discourse can be made to partake of those qualities which constitute the special charm of the

extempore sermon, the more nearly it will approach to perfection. But, it is evident, that the freedom of action, the warmth, energy, and unction, which characterize the extempore discourse, cannot be attained, in any measure or degree, by him who delivers his sermon *memoriter*, unless he "possess" it perfectly and imperturbably. It is equally evident, that the more perfectly he "possesses" it, the more thoroughly he will be able to throw off all unpleasant stiffness and restraint; the more nearly he will be able to approach the ease, facility, and grace, which mark the accomplished orator; the more easily he will be able to give scope and play to the inspirations of that zeal, and the movements of that unction, which are the special prerogatives of the Christian preacher.

St. Francis de Borgia, in his instructions to preachers, thus speaks of this matter. "After having written his discourse," he says, "the preacher must, before venturing to appear in public, repeat it from time to time; and, this, not only to impress it on his memory, but also to regulate the tone of his voice, his gesture, and his whole exterior bearing; and he must do this all the more diligently if he have not received from nature, or acquired by study and long practice, the faculty of preaching with ease and grace."* And, to this, we may add the wise counsel of St. Francis de Sales. "Preach often," he writes, "there is no other way of becoming perfect. Begin by saying four words, then go on to eight, then to twelve, and, in the end, you will be able to continue for half an hour."

Such is the method, and it is in truth a laborious one, which most young beginners will find it necessary to adopt. In some circumstances, and for a certain length of time, it would seem to be essential. It requires much time, much study, and great courage, in order to enable the young preacher to overcome the weariness and disgust which are

* De rat. conc. p. 12.

almost inseparable from it; and this is the first great inconvenience under which it labours In the second place, the preacher who is a slave to mere words, is almost certain to break down some time or other, no matter how well he may have committed his sermon to memory. A sudden distraction, the forgetting of a single word, will cause him to lose the thread of his discourse, and thus become inextricably embarrassed and confused. Thirdly, as we have already sufficiently shown, the necessity of adhering slavishly to the exact words of a written discourse is one of the greatest obstacles to a warm, earnest, and natural delivery. In such circumstances the preacher becomes an orator who declaims, a scholar who recites a task, rather than a man who gives spontaneous utterance to the convictions of his mind and heart. The very constraint of his action—the very look of his eyes, betrays that it is his *memory*, rather than his *intellect*, which is at work. Lastly, and this is perhaps the most formidable objection which can be advanced against this practice, the man who simply recites his discourse *verbatim* from memory, who cannot say a word which he has not previously written, is altogether unable to follow those inspirations which the Spirit of God may impart to him, during the course of his sermon. Still less can he modify his discourse according to those circumstances which may present themselves, and which he could not have foreseen; neither can he vary and adapt his language to the capacity of his special audience. St. Liguori makes some remarks on this subject which are most practical and worthy of deep consideration. "These kind of preachers," he says, "carry their discourses in their memory, and, whether they speak to the ignorant or the learned, they will not change a single word. They perceive that their audience do not comprehend them. No matter: they will give no new development, no further explanation. They will clear up no point, and present it under different and more intelligible aspects. They will

confine themselves to repeating the lesson which they have learned."

Hence, although this "slavery of words" may be absolutely necessary for some time in the commencement, and, although much may be done to modify, if not altogether remove the inconveniences which result from the system, nevertheless, in view of these inconveniences and others to which it is not necessary to make more minute reference, the young preacher will endeavour, prudently and by degrees, to free himself from its trammels.

The faculty of memory, under an oratorical point of view, may be divided into a memory of *words*, and a memory of *ideas*. The memory of *words* is that which retains every syllable and every phrase, precisely and literally, as it was written. The memory of *ideas* is that which seeks to retain the sense, the substance, the foundation and connection of that which we have read or written, without chaining itself down to the mechanical and literal recollection of every individual word or phrase. Or, in other terms, whilst the memory of *words* is directed to the retaining of the *ipsissima verba* of a discourse, the memory of *ideas* is directed to, and is satisfied with, the retaining of the sense and substance of it.

With this preliminary explanation, we venture, then, to assert, that the young preacher should endeavour, prudently, and in a certain degree insensibly, to abandon the memory of words in order to cultivate and attach himself to the memory of ideas. It is scarcely necessary to point out the reasons which should induce him to adopt this latter course. The great saving of time and labour; the increased warmth, energy, and fervour of delivery; the power of adapting and modifying his discourse to the different wants, the special capacity or needs of his flock, are motives sufficiently strong and powerful. To the opinion of Quintilian, who thus writes, *Abominanda hæc infelicitas, quæ et cursum dicendi*

*refrænat et calorem cogitationis extinguit: miser enim et pauper orator est, qui nullum verbum æquo animo perdere potest,** we may add the counsel of St. Augustine, who impresses upon the preacher the necessity of ascertaining from the movements of their body, and the expression of their countenance, whether his audience comprehend him or not, and whether they are moved or not by his discourse. If he thus discover that they do not understand him, or are not affected by what he advances, he must, according to the advice of this great master of Sacred Eloquence, present his subject to them in other shapes and from other points of view, until he gains his end, a result which, the holy doctor wisely adds, is altogether out of the reach of him who is unable to advance a step beyond the words which he has committed to memory.†

Whilst, however, we counsel the young preacher to labour to acquire such modest confidence in himself, and such prudent self-possession, as will enable him gradually to throw aside the "slavery of words," it is equally necessary to put him upon his guard against any undue reliance upon his powers, before they are sufficiently developed and matured. In other words, he must not attempt to run before he knows how to walk. If, in order to discharge his duty with credit to the church and himself, he find it necessary, even for several years, to undergo the labour of writing his sermons and committing them *verbatim* to memory, he must not shrink from it, or give up his task in weariness and disgust. It is his only chance of ultimate success, but that ultimate success is certain if he have only courage enough to undergo the labour which is necessary and indispensable to its attainment. And, at the very worst, what will his labour be, if compared to that which is undergone by the barrister, for an end and with motives which surely cannot be put in comparison with those which animate the true priest of God.

* Lib. viii. † De Doct. Christ., lib. iv. 25.

As, in course of time, his knowledge becomes more deep, ready, and expedite, whilst his self-possession and facility of speaking are increased and developed by every succeeding appearance which he makes in public, he will be able to satisfy, not only himself, but what is of much greater importance, the obligations of his sacred calling, without the labour of writing his discourse from end to end, and of committing it, no less laboriously, to memory. It will then be sufficient for him to prepare his discourse *substantially*, according to the method explained at p. 83. Instead of being tied down to the memory of words, he can reasonably be satisfied with the memory of ideas; and, so, with glory to God and credit to himself, discharge the obligation which the patient labour of his early years will thus render easy to himself, and useful to his people. But, to repeat what we have already so frequently advanced, let him neglect this preliminary but essential labour, and growing years in the ministry will only confirm him in his imperfections, without rendering the real toil of preparation one degree less heavy, or less painful. Having never laid the foundation, it will be little wonder if he never succeed in raising the edifice. It will be less wonder still, if, after a time, he give up the pretence of preparing his sermons at all; if he trust to the inspiration of the moment for the word which will not be at hand when he requires it—for the idea which will never be ready; if he end in becoming a declaimer of empty, vapid, meaningless and useless platitudes, instead of a preacher of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—that Gospel which, in the mouth of the true priest, is more living, effectual, and piercing, than a two-edged sword.

We may conclude this portion of our subject with the remark, that there is no faculty which is more improvable than that of memory. It may be developed to a prodigous extent by discreet and daily exercise. Nothing conduces so much to ease and facility in committing a discourse to

memory as a methodical and well ordered style of composition, where nothing is isolated, where the ideas follow and beget one another, where everything is in its proper place. When his discourse is drawn up in this methodical and well-ordered manner, the preacher will have no difficulty in "possessing" it, at least substantially, from the exordium to the conclusion. There is no time so favourable for committing a discourse to memory as the silence of the night. In these moments of stillnes sand quiet, nature perfects and finishes the work which memory began. Above all things, when it is necessary to call upon the memory to make a vigorous effort, the head must be disengaged and free from troublesome and distracting thoughts. These are some of the principal means which the preacher will find useful on this matter, and they are equally applicable to the memory of words, and to the memory of ideas.

With these precautions, the young preacher can scarcely fail or utterly break down in his discourse. Spite, however, of all his care, his memory may betray him on some occasion or other. If he merely forget some certain words, let him supply them as best he can at the moment. If it be some text or phrase which he cannot recal, let him pass it over. If the whole thread of his argument seem to disappear, let him pass on, as smoothly, and with as little embarrassment as is possible under the circumstances, to the next point of his discourse. The first and most essential thing is, *not to stop;* and the next is, to hide his confusion as perfectly as he is able. The danger of any such accident as this will be diminished each time that he discharges the duty of preaching. Let him, before entering the pulpit, be quite certain that he has *something definite and clearly marked out to say, and something which is worth saying.* Let him have, at least, its division, its transitions, its leading arguments, and its principal figures, thus clearly and definitely before his mind when he enters the pulpit, and it will be hard, indeed, if he

cannot find words in which to express the ideas which he has already conceived; if he cannot find language, not merely correct, but strong, earnest, and vigorous, in which to clothe those thoughts which are at once the creation of an intellect which knows how to conceive, and of a heart which knows how to feel, and become penetrated with, a subject which is undertaken at the command of God, and for the greater glory of His Holy Name.

CHAPTER X.

STYLE OF THE PULPIT.

IN the introductory chapter of this investigation into the nature of the Theory and Practice of Preaching, we advanced the proposition that the means by which the sacred orator proposes to himself to obtain his end is, by *Instructing*, by *Pleasing*, and by *Moving* his flock, since these constitute the three-fold element of the power by which the rhetorician acts upon the souls of his fellow-men, and acquires his influence over them. *Veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat.* We cannot, probably, more usefully conclude this portion of our enquiry, than by a brief resumé of these principles, and of the manner in which this three-fold element of persuasion has been applied to our subject, with some practical reflections on the whole matter in its relation to the style of the pulpit. In this, the First Series of the Work, our object has been to investigate and elucidate the "Theory" of Preaching. In a future series we hope to consider the "Practice" of Preaching.

Veritas pateat, veritas placeat, veritas moveat. Whilst to instruct, to please, and to move, most certainly constitute the three-fold element of the rhetorician's power, it is scarcely necessary to add that the presence of each element is not necessarily required in every case in order that a man may be eloquent. True eloquence is the art of acting upon, and influencing our fellow-men, through the expression of our own thoughts and feelings. Now, there may be circumstances in which we shall most fully gain this end by merely

instructing and proving, and, in these circumstances, we shall be eloquent although we may not move. For the same reason, if we are called upon to speak in circumstances where nothing more is required from us than to move, we shall be eloquent when we succeed in moving, although we may have paid no attention to instruction.

However, although the presence of each of these three elements may not be always essential, as a general rule they will be found, to some extent at least, in every complete and well-ordered discourse, and in the operations to which such a composition is submitted in the course of its preparation. In the "Invention" we find each of these elements, since, as a general rule, the preacher, in the Invention of his discourse, proposes to himself to teach, to please, and to move. We find them equally in the "Disposition" or arrangement, since, in his "Exordium," the preacher seeks to please his hearers and render them *attentos*, *benevolos*, *et dociles;* in the "Body of the Discourse" he endeavours to instruct, to teach, and to prove; and in the "Peroration" he aims at moving the heart and influencing the will.

In these pages we have considered at some length, and developed pretty fully, the action of what is technically called the logical element—*Veritas pateat;* since the chapter which treats of the "Body of the Discourse" has been devoted almost exclusively to this subject. We have also endeavoured to investigate the nature, to show the necessity, and explain the manner, of employing the esthetic, or moving element—*Veritas moveat.* We have to some extent, less fully and less directly, treated of what Aristotle names the political element of eloquence, that element by which the orator gains the good will of his hearers, and renders them well-disposed towards him—*Veritas placeat.* We deemed it advisable to defer the more exact consideration of this element, and of the true position which it holds in eloquence, to this place; since, although there is no controversy amongst writers as to

the necessity of instructing and of moving, there is at least some apparent disagreement as to the lawfulness or need of seeking to please.

Before we proceed to lay down any propositions on this subject, it is evident that we must have come to an understanding about our first principles and definitions. Before we assert that the preacher is at liberty, or is bound, to seek to please his audience, or *vice-versa*, we must clearly lay down what we understand by the term, *to please*, as applied to the orator. In many passages of his works, Cicero seems to understand by the art of pleasing nothing more than the pleasant balancing of one's periods, and the harmonious cadence of our sentences. But, it is pretty evident, that the art of pleasing, as applied to the sacred orator, can never consist in this. He may please without any such power of balancing his periods, without any such facility in securing an harmonious cadence to his sentences. He may fail to please although he possess these qualities in all their perfection. Nay, he may fail to please simply on this account. Fenelon, in his *Dialogue sur l'éloquence*, seeming to confound matters which are very distinct, whilst he bestows all possible commendation upon those qualities of a discourse which directly tend to persuasion, rejects the opinion of those who contend that the preacher, in view of his special end, is also bound to seek to please. For the art of pleasing he seems to substitute the art of description, or, of word-painting: a quality the necessity of which we have already sufficiently established as a means, but not as the art itself, of pleasing, or as its substitute.

Whilst, therefore, we embrace the opinion of St. Augustine that the sacred orator is bound, not only to instruct and to move, but to please, we also adopt the term in that broad and true signification in which he employs it; and we assert that the art of pleasing, as applied to the preacher, is neither more nor less than the art of causing himself to be listened to with pleasure, with interest, and with confidence. In

other words, the preacher must be pleasing to his hearers, and thus gain their interest and confidence, through the conviction which they have that he is a good man, through the solidity and special fitness of the doctrine which he proposes to them, and through the attractive and engaging style, of composition and delivery, in which that doctrine is presented to their notice. Hence, we assert that every preacher is bound to seek to please, since, in this sense, the art of pleasing—the *Veritas placeat*—is essential to his success.

We have, in the preceding pages, sufficiently established the absolute necessity under which the preacher lies of possessing the esteem and respect of his hearers, and of preaching a doctrine which, by its clearness, its solidity, and its special adaptation to their character, dispositions, and necessities, may be calculated not only to be useful to those who listen to him, but also thus to conciliate that good will, esteem and respect. On these points there can be no dispute. But, it may be fairly asked, to what extent the Christian preacher is at liberty, or is bound, to despise the graces of merely human eloquence, that he may thus more fully emulate the simplicity of the Gospel, and the folly of the Cross; or, on the contrary, to what extent it is lawful for him, or incumbent upon him, to employ the graces of language and the charms of style, that, by their means, he may the more easily please his hearers, and by pleasing them, gain them the more readily and effectively to the love and service of the Almighty God? And, on this point, we do not hesitate to advance a two-fold proposition which appears to contain the views which are at once the most practical, the most reasonable, and the most generally received, on this important subject.

Whilst we are certain that the preacher should not seek to please his hearers by addressing them in a style of affected elegance, or with strained effort after effect, we are equally confident that he ought, with a view to their conversion, to

embellish the preaching of the Divine Word with all the charms of true and solid eloquence, in such a manner as to render it pleasing to his audience, and by this means more efficacious for their conversion.

It is evident that the preacher who affects a laboured elegance of style, or who strains after mere empty display, loses sight, not only of the very end of his preaching, but of those who are his masters and his models in this holy work.

*Non doctor verbis serviat, sed verba doctori,** is the wise and true principle of Eloquence as laid down by St. Augustine. The true orator employs words indeed to express his ideas, but the word is ever made subservient to the idea; whilst he who seeks to please by his affected elegance of style and of composition, is vastly more solicitous about the word than about the idea which it may express. He thus not only perverts the word from its end, but sins against good taste by the manner in which he employs it. The orator who is governed by good taste seeks to keep himself out of sight, to cause his hearers to forget the speaker in the words which he utters, and, as a natural consequence, he conceals his art under the simplicity and modesty of his language. He is, and he desires to appear, altogether absorbed and taken up with his subject. But the man who strains after mere effect, and who aims at mere elegance of style, acts in direct opposition to this principle. Losing sight of the fact that true eloquence is in the thought, and not in the mere word, his whole care and solicitude are directed to the elaboration of his words and the trimming of his sentences, but although he may by this means succeed in amusing for a time, he will never really please, and will very soon begin to disgust his hearers.

Such a false style of preaching is not only opposed to good taste, but is unworthy of the minister of the Gospel. The man who preaches in this style lowers himself to the

* De Doct. Christ., lib. iv., 61.

level of the young rhetorician whose whole energies are directed to the turning of a phrase. He degrades the Word of God to the service of human eloquence, insead of making human eloquence subservient to the Gospel of Christ. Instead of entering the pulpit absorbed with the great idea of the dignity of his mission, and penetrated with an intimate appreciation of the grandeur of those subjects which he is privileged and commanded to preach—the glory of God, and the salvation of immortal souls, he carries with him, even into the presence of God, nothing but his own narrow views, his own petty interests, and his own wretched vanity and self-seeking. The preacher simply degrades himself when, in place of searching the hearts, awakening the consciences, and withdrawing them from the sinful pleasures of the world, he proposes to himself to tickle the ears, and minister to the diseased appetites of his hearers. It was not thus that St. Paul preached, nor was it by these means that he rendered the Gospel pleasing even to the educated and fastidious Corinthians. It is not by such a style of preaching as this that the Christian orator is to subdue his age, to become the judge and not the slave of his hearers, to speak to his audience as their master and not as their servant. If he have ever fully realized the great idea of Pere M'Carthy that the Christian orator is not a *preacher* but a *converter*, he will no longer seek to please the ear, but to change the heart, to cure the sick instead of merely trying to amuse and distract them. If he ever employ those ornaments which may become his subject and his style, he will not use them for their own sake alone, but agreeably to the counsel of St. Augustine: *Fertur impetu suo, et elocutionis pulchritudinem, si occurrerit, vi rerum rapit, non curâ decoris assumit.*

Nor can anything be more prejudicial to real success than this affected style of preaching. Most surely God will never bless the preaching of those who preach themselves, instead of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified: and no matter

elegant it may be in composition, no matter how redolent of the choicest flowers of rhetoric, the word that does not receive the fruitful blessing of God, will be barren and sterile. Looking at the question from a merely human point of view, is it not evident that the preacher who bestows all his attention upon the mere turn of his phrase, the choice of his expression, and the harmony of his periods, will most substantially interfere with the force, the energy, the strength, and the freedom of his composition? It becomes a conflict between the head and the heart, between the ideas to be expressed and the mere words in which they are to be clothed, and the heart and the ideas are sacrificed to the intellect and the words, which is a perversion of all order and of all principle. Moreover, in our ordinary congregations, how many are there who comprehend these long periods, these poetical phrases, these far-fetched metaphors, these heaped-up epithets, these newly-invented and fantastic words? But, even supposing them to be intelligible, they produce no fruit, because, being as they are, the inspiration of the merely human spirit, smacking much more of the schools than of the Gospel, they bring no grace to the soul, they write no salutary impressions upon the heart, they partake in no sense and in no degree of the qualities and of the effects of that Divine Word, which is more piercing than any two-edged sword, which reaches unto the divisions of the soul and the spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. No; let the young preacher be assured that it is not by empty words, by affected elegance of style, by mere figures of speech, that he will lead his hearers to the feet of Jesus Christ; that he will gain his greatest triumphs over the powers of sin and of hell. Let him rather study to imitate the examples which are placed before him in his Divine Master and the Saints. Who could have preached so eloquently if He had wished, who could have turned to such account the graces of style and the charms of language, as

our Divine Lord? Nevertheless, the preacher will find nothing of this kind in the Sermons of his Lord and Master. Elevated and profound in thought, they are simple and popular in expression. Replete with thoughts and principles of morality that are worthy of the study of the most elevated intellect, these thoughts and these principles are couched in language which brings them home at once to the mind and the heart of the humblest hearer. It was thus that the Apostle of the Nations made known the will of God to his hearers. *Prædicatio mea non in persuasibilibus humanæ sapientiæ verbis. Misit me Christus evangelizare non in sapientiâ verbi, ut non evacuetur crux Christi.** And such, too, has been the preaching and the practice of all the Saints of God who have been called upon to preach His Holy Gospel.

But, whilst we thus condemn and reprobate that affected style of preaching which sacrifices sense to sound, which seeks to please simply for the sake of pleasing, we are no less certain that the preacher of the Gospel is bound, with a view to the conversion of his people and the becoming discharge of his duty, to adorn the Word which he preaches with all the charms of a true and solid eloquence.

The truth of this assertion will be sufficiently established if we consider for a moment the constitution of the human heart, the respect which is due to the Word of God, and the constant practice of the greatest preachers of antiquity.

There is in the human heart an involuntary esteem for the eloquent man, which captivates their attention, enchains their interest, and keeps an audience hanging upon the lips of him who speaks with eloquence and force. On the other hand, there is a natural disgust and aversion to him who speaks badly. Now, all this is doubtless the result of that self-love which causes us to listen with pleasure to those who, by the correctness of their language, and the diligence with which they have prepared themselves, thus testify to the

* 1 Cor. i. et ii.

esteem in which they hold us, and which causes us to turn away with weary impatience and disgust from those who do not address us in such terms as we deem due to our position, education, etc. Having its foundation in self-love, no doubt this sentiment of the human heart is wrong and blamable. No doubt man ought not to allow himself to be influenced, nor his judgment to be warped, by these views. But, we must take man as he is, and not as he ought to be, and, therefore, if we find the heart of man thus influenced and governed, if we know that there lurks within his soul this involuntary esteem of him who is truly eloquent, we must avail ourselves of this influence, and of this esteem,to turn him to our purpose and our will; we must avail ourselves of his love of eloquence; we must strive, in our own proper measure and degree, to acquire this gift in all its true and solid perfection; and this, not so much for its own sake alone, as that by its means we may please our hearers, and by pleasing them, render them attentive to our instructions, docile and obedient to our exhortations, and thus convert and gain them to God. There is no controversy as to the necessity of moving, but, as an ordinary rule, the preacher will hardly succeed in moving unless he is also able to please, and this is evident.

These remarks, which are true in their application to eloquence in general, acquire an additional force when applied to the preaching of the Gospel. And, here again, we must take men as we find them. If men were all they ought to be, they would love the Gospel, with its salutary precepts and its wholesome restraints. But the contrary is the fact. They listen with unwillingness and distaste to the doctrine which proposes to them Christian abnegation as one of the highest and most indispensable of their obligations; and, yet, we must persuade them, not merely to accept our teaching on this point, but to reduce it to practice. In order to succeed, we shall certainly be under the necessity of calling to our aid every assistance which can

be legitimately employed. Render our doctrine as agreeable as we may, present it in the most attractive form that we are able, and there will still be many who will not receive it from us! How, then, will it be, if we disgust our hearers by the roughness of our speech, the uncouthness of our language, and the negligence of our composition? Let us therefore take care that whilst we avoid the Sylla of affected elegance we do not fall into the Charybdis of uncouth rusticity. The least experience of the world, or of the human heart, will teach us that the greater part of men require to be won to the truth by the attractive dress and the pleasing style in which it is presented to them. *Illum qui est delectatione affectus, facile quo volueris duces; nemo flectitur si moleste audit.*

It would be easy to show, that the very respect which is due to the Word of God will impose upon the zealous priest the obligation of doing all that lies in him to present it to his audience in a proper and becoming dress; in other words, adorned with all the charms of true and solid eloquence. Such has been the view which has ever been held by those who are most worthy of our imitation. St. Gregory Nazianzen tells us that he travelled by land and by sea to acquire the art of eloquence. "I do not regret," he says, "those pains and those fatigues which were the cost at which I acquired such a precious talent. I desire to possess it in all its fulness. I have abandoned all things else for God, this is the only one of my goods which remains to me. I have devoted myself without reserve to the art of speaking. I have made it my inheritance, and I will never abandon it." "Most likely," cries St. Augustine, "I should never have been converted if I had not been attracted to his instructions by the eloquence of Ambrose;" and, hence, following in the footsteps of his great master and model, St. Augustine devoted all the energies of his profound intellect to the study of Sacred Eloquence. With this view he composed

his great work—*De Doctrina Christiana*, a work of inestimable value to the Sacred Orator, and one whose wise precepts and sage counsels form, we venture to hope, the very marrow and essence of all that is best, most sound, and most worthy of being reduced to practice, in these imperfect pages of ours.

We take it, then, for granted, that the preacher is bound to cultivate his style, that he may thus be able to embellish the preaching of the word with the charms of a true, a solid, and a substantial elegance. We take it, too, for granted, that, in this sense of the word, he is bound to seek to please his hearers. Not, as we have said, for the *sake* of pleasing, but, that, by rendering the doctrine which he preaches acceptable to his flock, he may persuade them to embrace its salutary precepts. *Ornatu non jactanter, sed prudenter utamur, non ejus fine contenti quo delectatur auditor, sed hoc potius agentes ut ipse ad bonum quo persuadere volumus adjuvetur.* Whilst he remembers that he is the *adjutor Dei* whose blessing can alone crown his work with a fruitful increase, he will also remember that God expects him to employ, in their highest and most perfect manner, all human means which are legitimate, for the attainment of his end. He will remember, that the imagination and the passions have come to man from the hand of God; that being the gifts of God, they are good, and are therefore to be employed and directed to His greater honour and glory. Our Divine Lord Himself, in His infinite condescension, did not disdain to make use of them as occasion offered. If these gifts can be abused they can also be employed to the greater glory of Him who gave them. The zealous preacher will ever labour thus to employ them. Employing them in the cultivation, and for the ends of true and solid eloquence, he is employing them legitimately, and in such a manner, and with such an aim, as will not fail to bring glory to God, salvation to immortal souls, and to himself a recompense *magna nimis*, in

the fulness of which the remembrance of his labours and his toils shall be swallowed up and lost for ever to his sight.

Whilst we thus take it for granted that the preacher of the Gospel is bound to use his utmost efforts to become truly, solidly, and substantially eloquent, we also venture to hope that in these pages we have sufficiently demonstrated the nature and the essential qualities of pulpit eloquence. Whilst there are occasions on which the sacred orator may, and ought, to aspire, as God may give him power, to the highest flights of eloquence, it will more frequently be his duty and his inclination to adapt himself to the understanding and the capacity of the humble and the ignorant. Above all things, the style of the pulpit is *popular*, in the best and only true sense of the word. It is simple without ever becoming mean. Whilst it adapts itself to the comprehension of all, it never descends to vulgarity, or loses sight of the truth that simplicity, of thought and of expression, is compatible with the greatest purity of style and propriety of terms. It is essentially clear, not merely with an absolute, but with a relative clearness, so that the whole audience have no difficulty in comprehending the meaning of the preacher. Ever grave, ever serious, flattering no one, wounding no one, it clothes the truth with which it deals in a garment of native dignity, of sweet and of modest majesty. *Plena gravitatis et ponderis*—it never becomes heavy. It never trifles, although it represents the circumstances which it presents to an audience in such a lively and sensible manner as to bring them vividly before the mind. It is full of colour—colour oftentimes of the deepest hue, but ever true, ever natural; a colour which is borrowed from the writings of those divinely inspired men whose pencils were guided by the Spirit of God. It knows how to modify its expressions, to change its words, to vary its comparisons and its arguments, to present the truth which it treats in different shapes and in different forms, according to time, place, and

circumstance. In fine, the style of the pulpit is warm, earnest, and fervid. It is at once the witness and the exponent of strong convictions and of ardent feelings. It is the *Grande dicendi genus* of St. Augustine—that grand style which has its foundations, not in mere words, but in the transports of the soul which is profoundly moved. It is the style whose effects are likened by St. Paul to those of a two-edged sword. It is the style, the cultivation of which is inculcated so strongly by our Holy Father, whom may God long preserve, in his Encyclical Letter of 1846. It is the style whose conceptions and whose utterances are inspired by prayer, by the diligent study of the Holy Scriptures, but, most of all, by that determined will to attain his end which the zealous priest of God ever proposes to himself, by that hunger and thirst for souls with which he is ever consumed.

Ut qui gloriatur, in illo glorietur, in cujus manu sunt et nos et sermones nostri. Sap. VII. We have compiled this treatise, and we now offer it to the young preacher, in the hope that it may be of some small service to him, in aiding him to discharge worthily the high and holy office of preaching the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The labour of its preparation will be more than recompensed if, spite of its imperfections, it may help even in the lowliest degree, to promote the Greater Glory of God, and the Salvation of Immortal Souls.

James Moore, Printer, 2, Crampton-quay, Dublin.

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Potter, Rev. Thomas J., Prof.

Sacred Eloquence.

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